The Child's Religious Life

William George Koons

THE

CHILD'S RELIGIOUS LIFE

A STUDY OF THE CHILD'S RELIGIOUS NATURE AND THE BEST METHODS FOR ITS TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

By

REV. WILLIAM GEORGE KOONS, A.M., B.D.

With an Introduction by

THOMAS B. NEELY, D.D., LL.D.

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & PYE

CONTENTS

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

PART IV

Methods of Religious Training

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

INTRODUCTION

More attention than ever before is now being given to the study of childhood—the study of the child physical, intellectual, and moral. The child at different periods of physical and intellectual development has been closely watched, child phenomena have been observed and studied, and important principles have been deduced and classified.

All this has led to a better understanding of child nature, and to a more scientific and, at the same time, simple statement of child conditions and child needs.

It is probably too soon to pronounce any particular system as perfect, but, nevertheless, a great mass of material has been gathered and certain fundamental principles have been demonstrated.

Until recent days the most of this investigation has related to the phenomena of physical and intellectual development, but now the results of these inquiries are being applied to the child's religious nature. It is probable that there is some danger of making an application without remembering the difference of the sphere which is now being entered, and a danger of too close a linking of physical development with religious development, as though the former were the cause of the latter; nevertheless, on the whole, great good is likely to come from this application to the moral and religious development, if we keep in mind the fact that the cause of development in one realm is not the cause of development in another. Material substance goes to build up the body, but something different is needed for the mind, and something still different for the moral and religious nature. It is also to be remembered that conversion is not the result of a certain physical or intellectual development.

It is evident that the way to study a child's religious nature is similar to the way the child's physical and mental natures are to be studied. We are to patiently behold the living child—not one but many children—and by actual observation ascertain certain facts and from the facts draw reliable principles which may be applied to children generally and also to exceptional cases.

The best period for religious work is childhood. Then the parent, the teacher, the preacher, and the Church may do the best work, do it most easily, and secure the best and most permanent results. Here, however, is the field where there have been very many failures, so many that we should anxiously inquire as to the cause.

Failure in the religious development of children is due to a number of causes, only a few of which can be mentioned at this time. The first is almost absolute neglect of the religious nature of the child, a neglect which has its primary place in the home where parents who carefully attend to the physical and intellectual education of their children give scarcely any attention to their religious culture. The second is a misconception as to the religious nature and the cause of development of that nature. The third is the use of faulty or injurious methods in the effort to bring about the right development.

If little children are regarded and treated as men and women, of course there must be some degree of failure, because as a matter of fact little children are not men and women. The manifestation of the religious nature of the little child may be assumed to be as different from the manifestation of the religious nature of the adult as the intellectual nature of the little child is different from the mental nature of the mature man or the mature woman. If that is so, then the child must be approached in a manner different from the way we approach an adult. Consequently if the means which are successful in the case of grown people are not successful in the case of little children, then we should find means that will be adapted to them.

So, again, if little children are not men and women we should not expect in little children precisely the same manifestations of the religious life that we have a right to expect in mature men and women, any more than we should expect to find precisely the same physical and mental manifestations. Therefore we are not to deny the religious life of the little child because it does not manifest itself precisely in the same form presented by an adult. Indeed, in its way, very often the simple religious life of the little child is superior to the religious life of many adults, for it is simpler and sweeter.

That there should be a more thorough study of the child's religious nature is now generally admitted. We should ask: What is that nature? What moral and religious phenomena are connected with it? What changes take place in the process of development? How may this development be made more perfect?

From such a study facts will be perceived and principles will be presented which may be easily applied and be the means of producing better results than could be the case did we not possess such knowledge.

This book is the result of careful observation and close study. It presents many truths which too many have overlooked, and, while every reader may not agree with the author in all his views, nevertheless the studious reader will find it provocative of thought, and, even if he dissents from some of the points presented, he will find most profitable reading on every page. The work should be in the hands of parents, preachers, and teachers, and of all who deal with childhood. Its perusal will lead to more judicious efforts and to more successful results.

Thomas B. Neely.

New York City, March 5, 1903.

THE CHILD'S RELIGIOUS LIFE

PART I

FOREWORDS

1. WHY THIS BOOK?—It is inspired by a humble but earnest desire to point out the deficiencies in our religious work among children, together with practical plans for greater success in this important field. This first sentence contains a serious charge. What facts justify it? Appalling negligence heads the list of defects. Witness the large number of Christian parents who do little or nothing toward the religious help of their own families. Behold also the astounding indifference of the Church to this, her most promising work. Delay stands next. Both home and Church may be justly charged with the folly of neglecting the religious life of the child until nature's appointed harvest time is past—until the religious instinct is well-nigh dead and the child is firmly fixed in irreligious habits, perverted social tastes, and

wicked companionships. Neglect to use wise methods is a prevalent defect with those who are doing something in this field. The child's religious nature is imperfectly understood, and hence methods are inappropriate and unsuccessful.

Witness the results in the large number of children who come from our Christian homes to live irreligious lives. See also the meager success of the children's organizations of the Church—real success, in leading the children to follow Christ and in holding them to it for life. We have been paying relatively too much attention to the work among adults. Our labor has been to close the spigot, but we have left the bunghole open. Dr. Barrows says, "We have been paying too much attention relatively to old wild olive trees." We have been so busy straightening the trunk, pruning the branches, and spraying the leaves that we have left the roots to die of neglect.

Our methods of work in this all-important sphere are very much in arrears. Our religious training has been far more desultory and defective than our training of the physical and intellectual natures. But there are signs of a better day. It will not be long until the best methods of child culture shall be applied in the religious realm. This can result only from a thorough study of the religious nature of the child and of the methods adapted to naturally and successfully develop that nature. This book attempts such study, hence its reason to be.

2. The New Point of View.—The last twenty-five years have witnessed great thought changes which have vitally affected our religious views. In no realm are the changes more radical than in that which touches the religious training of the child.

(1) The new psychology has largely affected our notions of the soul and its experiences. This psychology is new in the sense that we are no longer studying children or adults theoretically or by logic. We are no longer settling by reason what children are or ought to be, but by actual observation of the actions, interests, and lives of the children around us. These mental states and experiences are a profitable study not only for the psychologist, but also for anyone engaged in the actual development of the child soul. It is increasingly recognized that the study of these new and practical phases of psychology is a necessity to intelligent training of the child's religious nature and life.

Some have placed a false estimate on the helpfulness of psychology. They have depended upon it to give definite method and theory for religious training. It only helps us indirectly. It gives us a true conception of the religious instinct and the stages of its development, and thus lays the basis for true and helpful methods. It narrows the field for experiment. We know in advance that certain methods are wrong—not suited to nature. It engenders in the religious teacher a feeling of mastery, independence, energy, and courage. It supplements native tact with a clear working view of the inner nature and reactions of the young immortal with whom he has to deal.

The psychologic view is a factor in the revolution now going on in the methods of teaching in our public schools. It has fairly entered the religious realm. Its history here is quite modern. It has found expression in numerous publications in recent years by such men as Dr. G. Stanley Hall, Professor E. D. Starbuck, Professor Earl Barnes, and Professor George A. Coe. The light already thrown upon the work of religious training from this new psychology calls for a new putting of our theories, and a new method of procedure in religious training.

(2) Then the child study movement of modern times, along with much that is valueless and some that is false, sheds a volume of light upon the problems of this difficult field. This movement began with certain measurements and weighings in order to determine the influence of certain con-

ditions over bodily health. From this it has spread to the study of the most minute details of body and mind. Children's lies, fears, interests, and notions of God and heaven, have been carefully collated and studied. The effort has been to derive practical principles and state them in popular language.

(3) The newer pedagogy has much to suggest to us. The study of child nature and methods of intellectual training have revolutionized our schools. The school-teacher who has not studied the principles of pedagogy is to-day considered poorly equipped for the work. Such study is to-day seen, more clearly than ever, to be a requisite in religious training.

It is said that at the battle of Santiago de Cuba General Chaffee was the only officer who acquired a really thorough knowledge of the ground to be fought over. By tireless energy in personal reconnoitering, by dark and daylight, he gained a working knowledge of all roads, of dangerous places and points of vantage, of the enemy's strength and exact position. No wonder he gained renown for good generalship. In our great work of capturing the children for Christ we need some preparation before the battle actually begins. We must know in the best way possible the nature of the child, the elements of character aimed at, and the methods most likely to bring the desired results.

3. New Light No Cause for Alarm.—"I am convinced that the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his Holy Word." Thus spoke the faithful pastor, John Robinson, in his farewell address to the Pilgrim Fathers, just before they set sail on the *Mayflower* for this New World. The fact is, new light and truth break forth with each new generation. We will prove ourselves unusually unworthy if we fail to receive our portion or to use it to practical advantage.

With the substance of the Christian religion men were never so well satisfied as to-day, but some of our ways of stating truths need revision and some of our phraseology must be changed. These obsolete phrases and antiquated theological statements lead to mechanical and conventional notions of such important subjects as the nature of religion, the work of the Spirit, and regeneration. The progress of the sciences, the change in religious notions, and the broader view of Scripture teaching call for a recasting of theological language. Religion in its new statement is not less real or supernatural than before, but more so. There has come to be a variance between the language of the older theological books and that of conscious experience. Some are holding on devotedly to the old phrases and, as Dr. B. P. Bowne says, are attempting "to experience theology instead of religion." Then a failure to experience what these high-sounding phrases lead them to expect gives an uncomfortable sense of artificiality in their religious life. We can well afford to use a phraseology which will not be misleading, even though it is new.

Many of the principles of this book will be new to some of its readers. But let us not despise a truth because it is new or in a new dress. Anything new in the religious realm is likely to act like an electric spark in a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen. An explosion is the first result in chemistry, but the second is the production of the world's drinking water. So a new truth, while it creates at first an explosion, will finally lead to the betterment of the race.

Instead, therefore, of being alarmed at a new truth let us make it the basis for better work. There are principles in this book which, if received and applied, will transform the methods of procedure in the whole field of religious training. These principles are not announced until they are found to be in harmony with the principles of Scripture, the real religious nature of the child, and the best modern thought and practice in this field.

4. Do We Need Theory?—There is no lack of books on methods of work among children in Sunday schools, Junior Societies, etc. As a rule these publish with pride the fact that they give no theories; practical plans only. But the fact is we need good sensible theory as the basis of effective practical plans. What is the natural religious outfit of the child? What his religious instincts, impulses, heredities, and possibilities of development? The answers to these questions will be called theories by some, and yet they must determine all sensible methods. Much of our failure in the realm of child religion has its explanation in our ignorance of many of these so-called theories. The religious nature of the child is such that it remains untouched by many of our traditional, practical plans.

So I lift the ban against theory, and invite everyone who has a sensible theory concerning the religious life of the child to announce it. Here is to be found the difference between the average mother and the one who wins and holds her children religiously. The former has no theories—and as a consequence little or no successful practice; the latter has both theory and practice: theory according to nature and practice according to theory.

Von Holst, in speaking of Mirabeau, the great

Frenchman, said that the methods used by his father in training that young genius were about as well adapted to his nature "as a blacksmith's hammer would be to the repairing of a lady's watch." Many of our methods of religious training have that same degree of adaptation. The failure has originated in a lack of sensible theory. Dr. G. Stanley Hall is right in saying, "After all, there is nothing so practical in education as the ideal, and nothing so ideal as the practical."

Besides, the worker who has the right method is rendered all the more efficient by knowing the principles and reasons which underlie that method. Native tact and instinct are valuable but not all-sufficient. Elizabeth Harrison says truly, "The mother's loving guidance can be changed from uncertain instinct into unhesitating insight."[1] Theory, reason, investigation change instinct into insight.

On the other hand, it must be said that mere speculative theory is the emptiest bubble. The study table is sometimes too far from the field of actual child life. Students are too apt to be found bowing before Bacon's "idols of the den." Of what has been said this is the sum: For mere speculation no room; but for sensible theory, based on nature, a wide place and an urgent need.

[1] *A Study of Child Nature*, p. 12.

A happy experience of ten years' labor for the salvation and training of a large Junior Epworth League, persistent observation, a sweet memory of the happy days spent in training my own little Irene, now in heaven, together with the careful study of the best publications on this subject, has put me in a position to properly blend the theoretical and the practical.

5. Training and Teaching.—Not one or the other alone, but both. In our religious work among children we have been so busy teaching that we have almost forgotten training. We have acted as if the teaching of a certain amount of catechism, Bible and general Church lore were the sum and substance of all that can be done for the religious help of the child. Home and Church alike have been satisfied with teaching, and have largely failed to touch the real religious nature. The large number of children who have become expert in religious knowledge, but have remained irreverent, wicked, and godless, proclaims with clarion voice that teaching is not enough.

The distinction between the two is very clear. Dr. H. C. Trumbull thus states it: "The terms training and teaching are often used interchangeably, as covering the entire process of a child's education. In this sense a child's training is understood to include his teaching; and again his teaching is understood to include his training. But in its more restricted sense the training of a child is the shaping, developing, and controlling of his personal faculties and powers, while the teaching of a child is the securing to him of knowledge beyond himself. It has been said that the essence of teaching is causing another to know. The essence of training is causing another to be and to do. Teaching fills the mind, training shapes the habits."[1]

The great lack in the religious education of the child is not teaching—though that in many cases is defective, and in some entirely absent. The preeminent lack is in training—such training as awakens the religious instinct of the child, inspires awe and reverence for the divine Being, makes nature the revealer of a Creator, and cultivates religious habits.

We plead not for less teaching, but for more. But our special plea is for such persistent, wise training as will make our teaching effective in character and life. We must reach the heart, the affections, the life. May the time soon come when the child who passes through a Christian home and the various agencies of the Church for his help, learning great stores of religious truth, but whose practical religious development is at

[1] *Hints on Child Training*, p. 11.

zero, shall be the rare exception and not the rule. Our greatest practical mistake is a dependence upon teaching without training.

Let us always remember that a child is largely a creature of training. Here he differs greatly from the young animal. The latter is largely a creature of instinct. He comes into the world with a large part of his life predestinated by his instincts. The child, on the contrary, has comparatively few instincts, and they are in a plastic state. The animal is to a great degree an automaton that grinds away slowly at its appointed grist. The child starts helpless, and dependent on his surroundings; but if these be proper he reaches a glory never reached by any other earthly creature.

The training here advocated will give us a larger grip than that of intellectual culture alone. We will reinforce the intellect by the development of the religious feelings, the training of the religious activities, and the ingraining of religious habits. Thus we will grip the child's affections, intellect, and body all at once. We will thus multiply our chances for winning and holding the child for Christ.

An intelligent saintly mother astounded me this summer by her answer to my question, "What ought we to do toward training the religious nature of children?" She said, "Let them alone;

that is the way I did." The result in her own family was natural to such a course of procedure. She has two sons, both grown. The one is an exemplary Christian, the other strongly irreligious. From early infancy she made large provision for their physical welfare, and they are both fine specimens of physical manhood. She also took good care of their intellectual equipment, and they are both mentally strong. But as to their religious nature, she "let it alone." One is a saint and the other a sinner. There must be a better way—a way by which the child, taken early, can be so trained that with almost perfect inerrancy he will be established in religious feelings, habits, character, and life.

6. WHAT IS RELIGION?—Dr. Daniel Steele said, wisely, "You can easily prove that the moon is made of green cheese if you smuggle enough milk and rennet into your astronomical definitions." Much depends on definitions. In the definition of religion here given the effort is to simplify, and at the same time strike the kernel of the matter.

We will be greatly helped in our search for the essential if we first brush away the accessory and conventional. Religion is not the mere acceptance of a creed. Religion is not the mere practice of a set system of morals. Religion is not the mere observance of a prescribed form of worship. These, and many like them, are results of religion rather than religion itself. So easy is it to mistake the fruit for the root.

Religion is man's response to the supernatural, manifesting itself at first in spontaneous feeling and belief, and as soon as possible in voluntary worship and service. This definition makes religion a constitutional characteristic of the race. It places it in the list of our spontaneous reactions and so makes it possible in the earliest period of child life, before reason and voluntary control are present in any large degree. It finds religion in all the worshipful tendencies and acts of the race, however crude they may be. It makes place for the feeling of the supernatural even when no clear notion of the Deity is held and no name is given him. It is grounded on the thought that God is a large element in the environment of every human being, child and adult, and that he constantly seeks to reveal himself and to awaken response in affection, feeling, service, and life. God does not intend the child to wait until he can reason from cause to effect, or master the design argument, or commit the catechism, before he is religious; but in his own way calls forth responses from the child spirit in his earliest days.

No extended remarks are necessary to show us that such a getting at the root principle of religion will help us in the work of this book. We see clearly in the child that which is to be trained. We get the biological view of religion, if we may use that term. We see that we are not called to ingraft a new thing into child life, but only to train and develop a native power or tendency. This view helps us to see most clearly that our duty is not fulfilled in teaching, and that we cannot rest satisfied until we have used many other avenues of influencing the child soul, and have led him to feel that God is a real part of his environment and a blessed, constant factor in his life.

7. Cooperation of Agencies.—No one agency can assume full responsibility for the religious welfare of the child. The parents who attempt to train the child within the doors of their own home, neglecting the church and social contacts, will find in the end that they have either a weakling or a wreck. On the other hand, and this is the common error, the parents who depend on the church for the religious training of their children, without making the home a cooperating agency, are bequeathing to others an impossibility.

An agent for a Children's Home Society met the application of a wealthy but godless woman, who desired one of the homeless little ones, by saying, "We would be glad to let you have the child if you were a Christian, but, as you are not, it is against our rules." "We will make that all right," she replied, "we have horses and a carriage and a servant, and we will send her to Sunday school every Sunday." The agent very wisely informed her that horses, servant, and carriage, all combined, could not take the place of a Christian mother and a religious training at home. In these days of multiplied Church agencies for the young many are tempted to forget that nothing and no one can take the place of father and mother and the influence of a really religious home.

Bishop J. H. Vincent has well said: "No one department of the Church can alone educate her youth. Certainly the Sunday school, at its best, cannot do it. There are other and more important instrumentalities. Home, with its authority, early opportunities, affection, and example; the sanctuary, with its living voice and solemn services; the pastorate, with its daily contacts and personal magnetisms; the press, with its silent, multiplied, and perpetual ministries—all of these must unite with the Sunday school to give it indorsement, support, and authority."[1]

The preeminent lack in religious training is in the home. Here reform in religious training must begin. The home has the child exclusively

[1] *The American Sunday School*, p. 9.

during his first four or five years, and in many, many cases this period of golden opportunity is entirely neglected. Under the mistaken notion that nothing can be done the parents sleep in summer but cry all winter. The neglect of the home during this early period sends to the church the child already astray. The church thus begins its work under a tremendous handicap.

The biggest thing that the church can do for the religious help of children is to reach, instruct, and inspire the parents at home to fulfill their God-given mission to the children. The church begins this part of her work when it leads unsaved parents to Christ. It accomplishes a still more difficult part when it leads the same parents to make their home a real religious training school for the children. The home and the church must be brought into a more general, a closer, and more hearty cooperation for the salvation of the boys and girls.

8. A Subject for Earnest Study.—No matter how great the native genius of those who work for the religious welfare of children they will still have need of close observation and protracted study in order to the highest possible success. Religious training, if intelligent, presupposes, first, a reasonable knowledge of the natural impulses, tendencies, emotions, and appetites of the

individual we seek to train; second, a working knowledge of the elements of character which we desire to reach by our training; and, third, an intelligent view of the methods of training in order that we may select those best adapted to the needs of the case.

To know a child through and through is not an easy task. We find it difficult to know ourselves, and much more difficult to know other adults. It is more difficult still to really know children. Motives do not label themselves. For instance, the real state of the child who seems so very pious may be that of self-conscious formalism. Only the thoughtful, intelligent worker can detect the shadings of these different elements of character, yet they are the necessities of intelligent training. Happily the kindergarten, child study, pedagogy, and the new psychology have blazed the way for a better understanding of child feeling, thought, and character. These efforts have not overcome the necessity of earnest study on the part of every individual worker in this field; they have only cleared the way for such study and shown its necessity. The parent, teacher, or other worker with children, who does not give faithful, earnest study in these fields will not be blameless in his failure.

There is too much ground for the strenuous charge of Professor J. M. Baldwin when, in speaking of the father's carelessness in reference to the training of his children, he says, "They are willing to study everything else. They know every corner in the house except the nursery. A man labors for his children ten hours a day, gets his life insured for their support after his death, and yet he lets their mental growth, the formation of their characters, the evolution of their personalities go on by absorption—if no worse—from immoral attendants."[1]

We are learning that there is an exact science of character to study. "The marvelous progress in all the sciences," said F. W. Parker, "proves that there will one day be a science of human evolution." That science is being slowly written. We have been some centuries in learning that children do not grow into this or that character by chance, but according to the stern laws of cause and effect. These laws hold even in the formation of religious character. The laws which control in the formation of character are difficult to discover and formulate because of the free will of the individual. But the will is not utterly capricious. It is influenced by the forces of heredity and environment. The latter is directly under our control in training the young child, and gives

[1] *Mental Development: Methods and Processes*, p. 366.

us the golden period of opportunity to influence will, habits, and character for life. We have no right to expect that a child neglected, or improperly trained, will, by some happy stroke of chance, choose the good, the pure, the Christlike, and build up strong religious character. There is rule, law, order, science in the growth of souls, and it is our business to study these to the fullest extent of our powers.

Although difficult, a child is a beautiful subject for study. Dr. G. Stanley Hall has said: "There is one thing in nature, and one alone, fit to inspire all true men and women with more awe and reverence than Kant's starry heavens, and that is the soul and the body of the healthy young child. Heredity has freighted it with all the accumulated results of parental well and ill doing, and filled it with reverberations from a past more vast than science can explore; and on its right development depends the entire development of civilization two or three decades hence. Simple as childhood seems, there is nothing harder to know; and responsive as it is to every influence about it, nothing is harder to guide. Just as to guide inanimate nature we must constantly study, love, obey it, so to control child nature, we must first, and perhaps still more piously, study, love, obey it."[1]

[1] *North American Review*, February, 1885.

9. LET US GET BACK TO NATURE.—Let no one think that in bringing earnest study, close observation, and the latest results of scientific research to bear on the subject of religious training we are in danger of getting away from nature and becoming stilted theorists. In fact the extreme advocate of so-called "practical methods" is in greater danger from this source. Modern child study, the new psychology, the kindergarten, and the new pedagogy furnish many of the principles which underlie the teachings of this book, and it is well known that all of these movements are attempts to get away from unnatural, stilted ways of dealing with human nature and to get back to nature itself.

The nature of the child powers, his natural outfit of impulses, instincts, and interests, and the order and stages of their development must determine matter, manner, and method in religious training. Professor John Dewey says, "The law for presenting and treating materials is the law implicit in the child's own nature."[1]

There is an order in nature, and this order is strictly observed in the unfolding of the child powers. There is therefore a time for all things, and anything neglected in its proper season cannot be so well done afterward. Now it has been

[1] *My Pedagogical Creed.*

tacitly assumed that religion is so good a thing, so divine a thing, that if presented at any time and in any method the child will or must receive it. Not so. Nature has her time for doing things, and if we will cooperate with her we must work when she says and as she says. Dr. G. Stanley Hall gives what he calls "The Parable of the Tadpole's Tail." He says: "I used to ask my students how many of them believed that the tadpole's tail ever fell off when it became a frog; and most of them thought it did. But every naturalist knows that there never was a tadpole's tail that fell off; and that is the point of all we have to say. Never a tadpole lost his tail. It was absorbed; and the very matter and blood that went to make tail was simply made over again into legs. And if the tadpole's tail is cut off then the legs never grow, and the frog is condemned to pass his life in a lower aquatic stage. He never becomes an amphibian, and never gets up on the land. That is the parable of the tadpole's tail."[1] This is an example of the stern manner in which nature holds to her own plans for the development of living creatures and of the summary punishment she visits on us when we fly in her face and attempt to shorten the process by cutting out any stage of growth which she has ordained. Nature

[1] *Principles of Religious Education*, p. 167.

reaches perfection in an individual only after he has passed successfully through every stage from the lowest up. If a lower stage is neglected, or improperly lived, the higher stage can only be imperfect, if attained at all. The religious nature of the child improperly provided for, or neglected in its earliest stages, is either dwarfed for life or killed.

It is the contention of this book that religious training has been only partially successful because we have set about it in a slipshod, unintelligent manner; and in the main have been fighting against nature. The old Jesuitical notions of "original sin" and "total depravity" have led us to look upon the child as naturally such a debased creature that, instead of studying his natural instincts, impulses, and interests with the intent of developing them, it has been our chief aim to fight against these with might and main, and to cudgel the child into the adult religious path regardless of his wicked natural feelings and desires. Thus we have been flying into the face of nature, and the results have been according. There is a better way, and by the grace of God we will find it.

10. The Child and the Personal Christ. —A word here to prevent misunderstanding. This book emphasizes the order of nature. It insists that the child's gradually unfolding powers

be carefully studied, and that the methods of training be adapted to the interests and capacities natural to the different stages of life. We will find that the earliest stage of a child's religious life is naturalism pure and simple. This is true of the infancy period, and for some months thereafter. The forces of nature appeal to his sense of awe and reverence. He receives impression from adult personalities about him. God communes in his own way with the infant soul. But all of the child's religious responses during this infant period are on the naturalistic plane; that is, they are void of intelligent, self-conscious will. With the coming of self-consciousness, at about four years of age, there becomes possible a dawning of personal relationship between the child and the personal Christ, though this relationship cannot reach great intelligence or nearness on the child's part before the notions of spirituality, personality, and moral obligation reach a working maturity; this comes to pass at adolescence, say about twelve years of age or something later.

To attempt to lead the child during his earlier periods into any philosophical or mature intimacy with the personal Christ is an unnatural forcing and results disastrously. From about four years on Christ will be attractive to the child as an heroic historic personage. At about eight years comparatively hazy notions of spirituality and personality possess the child mind when he thinks of Christ. By the beginning of adolescence these notions have become reasonably clear in the child mind.

In this book considerable attention is paid to the earlier periods of the child's religious life because they are so generally neglected; but everything herein taught finds its meaning and perfection in the full glory of the child's loving, saving fellowship with the personal Christ. We urge that nature be consulted, and that no philosophical understanding of fellowship between the child and the Christ be attempted until the child's powers are ripe for it; lest hypocrisy and a sense of unreality result in the child, to his lasting detriment. But, when the time has come, we sin against nature and the child soul, and against God, if we do not all in our power to bring the child into the closest fellowship with Christ.

PART II

A STUDY OF THE CHILD'S RELIGIOUS NATURE

THE child is born with certain capacities, tendencies, impulses, and instincts. The study of these natural characteristics, as far as they are related to the religious life and development of the child, is what is here meant by "A Study of the Child's Religious Nature." Such study must precede all really intelligent religious training. I know of no such serious study of the religious nature as is here undertaken.

CHAPTER I

THE CHILD MIND UNFOLDS GRADUALLY

THIS is one of the most important discoveries of modern child study. The mental capacities of the child are not all present at birth. Only a few of his mental functions—those necessary to the simple life he then leads—make response to the environment in those early days. A few of the instincts and impulses are pretty fully developed at birth, while others are weak and still others give no sign of their presence at all. As life advances the mental powers gradually unfold, rising from the level of the merely reflex and sensuous to the rational and spiritual. This truth is destined to revolutionize our school pedagogy, the religious training of children, and in fact all that has to do with the child's life and culture.

I. THE CHILD IS NOT AN ADULT IN MINIATURE.—The old idea was that a boy was a little man and a girl a little woman. All the faculties and capacities of adult life were supposed to be present in the smallest child, the only difference being in the degree of development and strength. Now it is clearly shown that some of the most important faculties of the adult mind are not at all present in the child. Those who still insist that they are there claim that they are dormant; but a dormant capacity is too attenuated for serious practical consideration.

Such authorities as Professor William James, Dr. G. Stanley Hall, Dr. Nathan Oppenheim, Professor E. D. Starbuck, and Dr. G. A. Coe agree that children's senses, instincts, views of truth, emotions, are very different from those of adults. They further agree that the old superstition that children have innate faculties of such a finished sort that they intuitively grasp great truths—especially in the religious realm—is a grave error, now, happily, passing away.

The senses develop first, the higher faculties later in life. These higher faculties first appear as hazy sentiments which are caught insensibly from the environment, through inherited predisposition, and become sifted, settled, and reasoned about, only at a later stage of life. This very evident truth has always been more or less clearly seen, but only in late years has it been distinctly taught as a regulating principle in our methods of child culture.

This principle has found more ready access to every other sphere than it has to the religious, but it is at last making its way here. Much of our work for the religious culture of children has been fruitless because we have been treating them as adults, appealing to instincts not yet awakened and to capacities not yet present. When they needed milk we have given them strong meat; and the result has been starvation or impaired digestion for life. The genetic view of childhood here given calls for a careful study of the capacities, impulses, instincts, and interests natural to each stage of the child's unfolding powers. This will give us wise natural method and successful practice.

2. An Interesting though Disputed Theory.—A theory which has the support of many great scholars accounts for the gradual unfolding of the child mind by teaching that each child re-

peats in its stages of growth from infancy to maturity the growth and progress of the race from its beginning to the present time. It is called, "The Recapitulation Theory."

The advocates of the theory think the evidence very clear that this law of recapitulation holds in physical nature. Life on the globe is said to have begun with the tiny amœba, whose whole body consisted of a single cell and by gradual stages reached vertebrate, complex existence. So each individual human life begins with a single cell, and in its stages previous to birth passes through many changes through which the race is believed to have passed. A visit to the surgeon general's office in Washington, where one may see the human embryo in the various stages through which it passes, is said to be convincing ocular proof of this theory.

This theory also finds its proof in the mental realm. The race and the individual are traced through similar, well-marked stages of growth, first, the period of vegetative innocence; second, the period of childlike simplicity and confidence; third, the imaginative or myth-making period; fourth, the critical or doubting period, and, fifth, the period of full intelligence—the altruistic period.

In the religious realm also the theory finds its parallels. The race and the child both have their stage of naturalistic worship, when every response of the child is on the naturalistic plane and no higher conception of spirituality or personality is yet possible. A later stage in both is marked by mythologic worship, when the heroic and mythical enkindle most readily the spirit of awe and reverence. At a later stage both the child and the race are found in the clear light of spiritual conception and personal worship of a personal Father.

Wide observation of the race and the individual leads to the conclusion that, in broad outline, such a parallel as the above really exists. Its main teachings are at least well enough established to lead to the conclusion that much light may be thrown upon the stages of growth in the child by taking a wide view of the stages of progress made in the history of the race.

3. PERIODS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT.—These periods have been more than hinted at in the preceding sections. Their importance demands a more extended study in order that we may hold clearly in mind their order of occurrence and the general characteristics of each.

(1) *Physical or Organic Periods.*—The first bodily functions of the young child are those performed by the heart and lungs. These are merely

automatic; that is, they are controlled by the purely reflex action of certain nerves and muscles and are entirely void of the higher powers of reason and will. Next in order is the movement of the spinal chord and certain muscles and nerves in connection therewith, by means of which the limbs and, finally, the whole body are brought under partial control. This is at first, and for some time thereafter, a purely reflex movement, though it gradually comes under partial control of the intelligent will. Then the five senses become active and are more fully still under rational control. Thus in the very order of our bodily functions God has stamped the principle of progress from mere naturalism up to rational self-determination.

The physical brain, now recognized as the seat of all mental action, has been closely studied. Each of our bodily movements is found to be under control of a particular little section or "center" of the brain. Close observation of the brain itself shows that the first centers to develop are those which control the heart and lungs, next that which controls the spinal chord, then the centers of sensation, and last of all the centers of reason and will. Thus on the physical brain God has written the same law of progress which we observed in the bodily functions.

The infancy period of life, extending from birth to about five years of age, is the period when the body needs most attention and the soul least. The infant needs more mother and almost no teacher; more of the educated nurse and an infinitesimal part of the metaphysician. The little body is, for all practical purposes, only a reflexive organism; intellect and self-control are entirely absent at the beginning, and only hazily present at the close of this period. Proper diet, cleanliness, open air, and plenty of rest and sleep, so as to build strong muscles, nerves, and brain, are primal requisites for this period—and in fact for all after life.

The period of childhood, extending from five to about nine, witnesses great physical changes. By about eight years of age the brain has practically finished for life its growth in weight and size. From five to eight this brain growth is so rapid that any mental strain during these years may prove ruinous. The body also grows rapidly during these three years. From eight to twelve there is comparatively little growth, but there is a striking increase in vitality, activity, and power to resist disease. The rapid growth of self-control between eight and twelve and the strong tendency to activity make this the harvest time of physical habits.

The period of youth, or adolescence, begins with puberty, at about twelve or thirteen, and extends to eighteen or twenty years of age. The beginning of this period is a time of great physical change. There is a marked increase in the rate of growth in height and weight. The heart and arteries are suddenly enlarged, and the blood pressure greatly increased. Blushing now is rapidly developed. The brain also takes on new activities, not by virtue of its enlargement, but there appears to be a "connecting up" of its centers, which give rise to a large group of new powers.

The gospel for the body is a phase of Christianity which is emphasized to-day as never before. It marks an epoch in the history of Christianity that we are gradually ceasing to despise and maltreat the body for conscience' sake, and are endeavoring by wise methods to build up muscles and nerves and to strengthen every bodily process. We have discovered that a strong body is the necessary basis of a sound mind, a pure heart, and a symmetrical religious life. Parents who, studying the physical welfare of their children and seeking by wise methods to attain it, regulate food and sleep, as to time and quantity, are doing much toward a proper training for life. Such physical treatment of the child lies very close to his religious training.

This wisdom is not always born of uneducated common sense. The study of the much-despised theories shows us beforehand what to expect, prepares us for certain conditions at certain times, and leads the way to proper treatment for a symmetrical development, physical balance, and nervous poise. These lie at the base of religious development.

(2) *Intellectual Periods.*—The brain, like all other natural things, grows. Child study and the genetic psychology have shed much light on the order of this growth. Looking at it from the intellectual standpoint, there are four great epochs in life.

(*a*) The infancy period, from birth to about five years of age, is preeminently the time of instinctive or spontaneous life. Intelligent self-control is dawning toward the close of this period, but most of its five years are purely instinctive or spontaneous. It is a time of vegetative innocence. The extreme evolutionist says it is the "little animal period." Indeed, during the early part of this period the babe is excelled in many desirable characteristics by the little animal of similar age. The young animal by the end of his first day of life performs feats of dexterity in moving about, hunting food, etc., which the human infant cannot match at the end of his first year. But by the end of his second year the child is doing things which the animal never will attain to.

To say that this infancy period is one of instinctive or reflex action is quite different from saying that the infant may not be reached, influenced, and trained during this time. Instinct and spontaneous impulse await the awakening that comes from the environment or surroundings. The senses are awake, and are the open gateways through which training may reach and influence the child life. All inherited impulses, tendencies, and instincts may be awakened, and strengthened, allowed to slumber, and sleep the sleep of death, or they may be improperly nourished and practically destroyed.

This is the period of life foundations, and yet it is almost universally neglected because of the mistaken notion that nothing can yet be done. "Leave all to nature" is a phrase which has become popular with some concerning the infancy period. It is either the highest wisdom or the height of folly according to the meaning we attach to it. If we take it to mean that we must not attempt purposeful training, must leave all to the chance or haphazard of nature acted upon by any sort of environment that happens our way, it is folly pure and simple. But if we understand by it that we must train along the line of the child's own nature, making our appeal to native instinct and impulses without waiting for intelligent cooperation on the part of the child, it is golden wisdom.

(*b*) The childhood period, from five to nine, and (*c*) the period of boyhood and girlhood, from nine to twelve, is the period of rapid growth in intellect. As distinguished from the previous period it may be called the intelligent period. The beginning of this period is marked by the rise of self-consciousness. This important function is not completed until a much later time, but by the close of the fifth year the child has fully separated himself from the mass of things around him and his experiences and belongings become strictly his own. The personal pronouns "I" and "my" get a new emphasis in the child vocabulary.

At the beginning of this period memory becomes a prominent faculty of the young child, and reaches its maximum power just before its close. Wide experiment shows that the climax of the power of memory is at eleven years of age. Hence this is nature's harvest time for drill in memory work. Understand you: no explanation; just memory. Catechism, Bible, hymns—anything that is to be memorized for life use has its place here. This is also the golden period of habit forming. Drill methods should now be at their best. Mechanize everything, and let the child learn by rote. Inculcate right habits, intellectual, moral, and religious. Drill, drill, drill; for habit is the basis of character. Dr. G. Stanley Hall, speaking of this period, says, "We are now educating the automatic bases of both mind and morals, and habits are never so easily formed or made stable."

Reason is still very primitive. Little is yet in the mind which has not been brought there by the senses. We must use wise methods to open wide the eye-gate and the ear-gate. Show, Cause to feel, Make see, should be our watchwords during this period, and not Explain.

(*d*) The youth period begins at about twelve and extends to maturity, at about twenty years of age. This is the period commonly known as adolescence. The intellectual revolution accompanying puberty, which falls in the beginning of this period, is as great as that which then takes place in the physical nature of the child. In fact there seems to be a close connection between the physical and intellectual changes. The rapid increase in the heart and circulatory system, together with the radical increase in the sexual organs, gives rise to a rapid development in feelings and emotions—fear, anger, love, pity, jealousy, emulation, ambition, sympathy, and sexual passion. Some of these, in fact, seem to be entirely new with the coming of this period, while all reach a new intensity and strength.

At the beginning of this period the physical brain reaches completeness. There is now such a connecting up of its various parts that large portions of its fibers now for the first time come into service.

The notion of the ideal now becomes clear. Up to this time the child has been restricted almost wholly to the actual, the individual; but now such general notions and ideals as right and wrong, duty and obligation, sin and holiness, take possession of the mind. This change is of marked value in training. Reasoning, explanation, appeals to ideals, are now in order, and may supplement all former methods and to a large extent take their place. That which has been done because it was instinctive, or because others commanded it, must now be thoroughly searched by the adolescent mind, using the light of his new ideals. This is the golden period for patient, truthful, loving explanation and reasoning.

This is also the time of transition from egoism to altruism. That simply means that the youth now changes from instinctive selfishness to instinctive sympathy with, interest in, and love for others. Young people now become interested in adults as never before, and one of their strong passions is to be treated as adults. The social life of the child has passed into another world. Previously his thoughts, his games, his very life, revolved around himself. Now his thoughts are of others. The opposite sex has a new charm, and this feeling gives color to many of his thoughts, motives, ideals, and life plans.

The adolescent is busy laying plans for life. Vocations, life-callings, and plans for every phase of life are now natural. For lack of proper training and guidance this natural impulse frequently results in grotesque mistakes. Here a point in method is on the surface. The adolescent develops a new sense of independence. This is a natural outgrowth of his newly awakened powers. He thinks for himself. Hence we must make our primary appeal to his reason. We can no longer coerce him—if we ever did. We must convince and win him.

The changes occurring at puberty are so great that Dr. G. Stanley Hall and others have called it a "new birth." These changes are fraught with great opportunity for good or for evil. Proper treatment and training settles the life on the side of honor, usefulness, and Christlikeness; neglect or wrong guidance confirms the life in wickedness and disaster. It is in accord with the above that the largest percentage of criminals is found in the later teens, and, at the same time, that the largest number of converts are received into the Christian Church during the same years.

4. Periods in a Child's Religious Life.—One principle must be kept constantly in mind in any helpful study of the periods of religious growth; that the religious capacities and life of the child keep pace with his general physical and mental growth. This is clear when we remember that even in religious matters we must take the child as he is. Its supernaturalism does not supersede the use of the child's own natural powers. Here we have been victims of much foolishness. Religion keeps pace with the unfolding powers of the child, hence he becomes progressively conscious of the supernatural and spiritual. God is always near the child mind, but the child only becomes intelligently conscious of God's presence when he becomes intelligently conscious of other things. His religious development, if under proper conditions, will keep step with his progress in other things. We will find this progress moving along a line of advance which is marked in his physical and mental growth. In this principle we find our basis for the classification of the religious periods.

(1) *The Instinctive or Spontaneous Period.*—This period extends from birth to about the fifth

year. It is also termed the Infancy Period. Religious life during this period is on the same level as the physical and mental life; that is, it is purely reflex. The cry, the laugh, and every other response of the infant, is almost, if not entirely, void of intelligence, memory, and will. It was a poet who first informed us that the infant smiles at his mother because he inherits a peculiar sensitiveness for his mother's face. It is true that the infant does smile at a very early age—some as early as the seventh day; but it is now well determined that the smile is simply the reflex action of an agreeable sensation, perchance of the mother's smiling face, or a bit of warmth, or a pleasant feeling in the stomach. The smile is beautiful, though void of intelligence, and a striking example of the child's early responses.

To say that the religious life of the infant is merely the reflex action of natural instinct and impulse, as they are pressed by their surroundings, is not at all to say that no religious training is possible in that period of life. The physical life and the mental life are likewise reflex during this same period, and both are so dependent upon the training afforded by adults that they may be either developed and made strong or vitiated and destroyed. The very life of the body depends upon the care and attention of the parents. The mental life is really equally dependent. The environment and food of the infant are dependent upon the parents, and the reflex action of all instincts and impulses awaits the impingement of the environment; and the infant nature, character, and life develop along the line of these instincts and impulses thus called into action and developed.

The truth is that this is the most plastic period of human life. The babe has no fully developed powers. Even the functions which are in action are in embryo. The young child is largely a bundle of possibilities. He has natural inherited tendencies and impulses, but these need awakening and training through activity. The agency that awakens and calls for this or that activity is the surroundings or environment. Here is the field for training. We can largely control the environment, and hence largely control the line of growth for the infant body, mind, and soul.

This is the period of most general and most fatal neglect in the religious history of children. A large percentage of children come to the years of intelligent life with their natural religious responses either crippled or dead. This condition prevails because of the mistaken notion that nothing can be done. This is Satan's choice trick in retarding the growth of the kingdom.

It is now well agreed that religious training, to be most effective and lasting must begin in the cradle. Froebel taught that "The unconsciousness of a child is rest in God." This is a pretty fancy, and a striking presentation of the thought that there is a close relation between the child soul and its Creator even during its reflex, unconscious period. There are avenues of personal impression open in the child soul which we have too little appreciated. Dr. Hall has said that during this infancy period the mother stands "in the place of God" to the child. This is another fancy, but it calls vividly before us the truth that there is a close intercourse between the child soul and the souls of the parents. The emotions and mental attitudes of the parents are immediately and unconsciously produced in the infant. If the parents are tranquil and calm these characteristics will naturally grow in the child. If they be reverent and worshipful the child will unconsciously inbreathe the same. So far, then, from being careless during this early period parents ought to be weighed down with the thought that the children are unconsciously and of necessity inbreathing and ingrafting every parental emotion and mental characteristic.

(2) *The Intelligent Period.*—It begins at about five years of age and extends to adolescence, at about twelve. A large circle of mental capaci-

ties has arisen by the fifth year. In a previous section we have noticed the rise of self-consciousness at about five years of age. This makes the child quite a different being for training. He is no longer semiconscious, or reflex, but one whose experiences are recognized as belonging to the self. We must now appeal more largely to the personal self. Even the five senses are now quite different; they have taken on an element of voluntary control, which makes them new factors for training. With this high power of self-consciousness and independent voluntary action there arises a new responsibility for the child. He is less a creature of circumstances, his life is more largely of his own making; hence an added responsibility. All of the child's religious responses take on this self-conscious, personal character with the beginning of the present period.

We have also seen that memory becomes a pronounced factor in the early part of this period and reaches its maximum power at eleven—near its close. What a large factor is memory in education and training! We are no longer dealing with a reflex automaton, who can only be reached and trained by unconscious imitation and involuntary processes and influences, but one who receives and holds impressions as his own.

The child now becomes a student of the great world around him. He has been in the world for four or five years, and has been molded by its influences, but he has now reached that stage where he starts out to get intelligently acquainted with it. This may be made an important factor in religious training. The child soul should be brought into close communion with nature. The life, beauty, and majesty of nature so touch the religious instinct of the child that they awaken the feelings of awe, reverence, and worship for "nature's God."

The child becomes a great questioner in the early part of this period. Professor J. M. Baldwin calls it the "Why Period." It is also the what period, the where period, the when period, and the how period—and, in fact, the general interrogation period. These questions will enter the religious realm. Wisdom and patience are required to turn this natural characteristic to religious advantage.

With the beginning of this period the child has his first decidedly intelligent notions of God and spiritual things. They arise simultaneously with notions of self. They may be crude, or even grotesque, but he will have such notions, and they are rude beginnings of better things. It is to be remembered, however, that his religious notions are not more crude than his notions of other things. Our business is to begin with the child where he is, and to train him toward where he ought to be. His first religious notions will be very materialistic, and only toward the close of this period do clear spiritual notions become possible. Professor J. R. Street made an extensive study of children to find out just when they turn from the more materialistic to the more spiritual notions of religion; for instance, when they cease to think of God as a big man and begin to think of him as a spirit. Four hundred children were carefully tested, and the time of transformation varied in different cases from ten to sixteen years of age, the average age was fourteen for girls and fifteen for boys. So during our present period we must expect only more or less materialistic notions of religious things; and we must suit matter and method to present interests and tastes, and gradually lead the child mind to clear spirituality.

We have previously seen that this is the period for rapid habituation. Between five and twelve the vast majority of our life habits are formed. The psychologists call the period from three years to nine "the formative period of the brain." Our habits have their real foundation in "brain paths;" that is, in practical language, whatever thought we have once had is more easily produced a second time, whatever action we have once performed comes more easily again, and so on. The ease increases until it supersedes the necessity of thought or will in any large degree. At this point habit becomes second nature and passes into character. This formative period of the brain is the golden period for ingrafting life habits and forming life character. Let us see to it, then, that the child is trained in habits of reverence, prayer, song, worship, and service. The child who reaches twelve years of age without being trained to do religious service, and to experience religious feelings, as naturally, as easily, and as habitually as he eats and sleeps, is to be pitied. Nature's seedtime has gone to waste, and it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the child ever to become a natural, easy, stable Christian. On the other hand, religious habits established in this formative period are so inwrought with the structure of the brain that they will likely abide for life.

(3) *The Ethical Period.*—This period begins at adolescence, about twelve years of age, and extends to maturity, and, in fact, through life. In some particulars this is the most important of all periods for religious training. The physical and mental changes occurring at the beginning of this period have been previously noted.

(*a*) The sense of personal responsibility now reaches maturity. This makes the youth an ethical being in the full sense of that word. (*b*) The notion of right and wrong is now fully developed and puts a new element in training. (*c*) The notion of spirituality has come gradually to completion. This opens up a vast realm of religious possibilities. (*d*) The adolescent becomes a social being in a fuller sense. This social instinct, rightly trained, seeks not only fellowship with mortals but even with God. (*e*) The adolescent becomes a conscious reasoner. He likes to try his new-found wings. His knowledge is limited, his reasoning often poor, but his confidence in his conclusions is perfect. Under these circumstances he doubts many things which he ought to believe, and believes many things which he ought to doubt. It was at this period of life that Descartes entered upon his unhappy career of doubting everything that could be doubted. Religious truth does not escape the ordeal natural to this period of life. But let us be patient, and remember that religion will stand the most rigid test. Only guide the youth to fair methods and correct processes of reasoning. Keep close to him. Don't let him get away. The outcome will be reasoned, settled faith for life. (*f*) The adolescent passes through a more or less critical period. Some become painfully cynical and censorious. Keep sweet, and patiently try to cultivate a better view point, a better spirit. Prune away censoriousness, but be sure to leave the child "a mind of his own." (*g*) Adolescent independence is in danger of running to the extreme of revolt against all authority. Then we have the swaggering chap who knows more than all his fellows, the young man who will not be religious because it means submission to God, and the adult who is an anarchist in every realm. Preserve independence, but prevent anarchy. (*h*) The adolescent becomes feelingly aware of his personal relation to God. In a sense he has been conscious of God's presence from infancy; all along he has been as fully conscious of this as of anything else. Toward the close of the last period this consciousness became reasonably clear, but now, with the coming of his moral ideals, he has a clear notion of his right or wrong relation to God. From this time on the rightness or wrongness of things is to be judged in the light of this personal standard. Wrongdoing now stands out clearly as "sinfulness," as the guilt of one person who has wronged another. Hence conviction for sin has now become possible in its full sense.

As the result of all the above the adolescent stands out fully equipped with all the natural capacities that have to do with religious life and character. Hence also he is a fully responsible religious being. Up to this time the responsibility has rested largely upon the parents and others, but now the youth, while not beyond the influence and help of others, becomes fully and personally responsible for his own moral and religious life.

Our study of the child's religious nature leads us to a very important conclusion: the child is so constituted that, under proper environment and training from infancy up, he will never be for one moment in life consciously astray from God. One period properly lived leads up to and prepares for the best life in the period that follows. The naturalism of the infancy period leads the way to the semi-intelligent mythical worship of childhood, and this in turn prepares for the clear personal, spiritual service of youth and mature life. There will be weakness, mistakes, shortcomings, but never a time when the child will feel and say, "I am a sinner. I am not even trying to serve God." His first real conscious moments will find him in the service of God—held there by his very nature and habits. These are the joint product of natural tendencies and good training. Proper training up to adolescence predisposes the youth, with his first fully responsible choice, to choose Christ and his service for life. The adolescent awakes from the previous periods to find himself already in loving relationship with Christ. All the force of nature and the momentum of habit lead him to fully and freely adopt this relationship and make it his own for life. That this blessed experience is so seldom realized in actual life is a condemnation of the average religious training given our children, but in nowise a disproof of the teaching above given.

Where, then, is our orthodox doctrine of sin, and where the necessity of the new birth? says the conservative. These questions will find answer in later chapters. Here we simply announce the great practical truth to which the teachings of Scripture, the study of the religious nature of childhood, and the breadth and efficiency of God's plan of salvation force us.

5. Why Study the Periods of Child Life? —Because such study is of great practical worth. A general knowledge of the order of the periods in child life and their general characteristics is a necessity to intelligent and successful religious training. Matter and method must be adapted to nature and needs. Nothing is good enough to do at the wrong time or for an individual to whom it is not adapted. The missing link in our religious training has been lack of adaptation. This failure has rested back on ignorance of the child's interests, notions, and impulses in the successive stages of his development. Our failure has been largely

in the earlier periods, and this, of course, has greatly crippled our efforts during later periods. We have failed in these earlier periods because our methods have been too adult, too theological; not enough of nature, of things active, pictorial, and concrete. Close students of the matter can scarcely fail to see that religion has been made distasteful to many children because it was presented to them in a manner out of keeping with their capacities and natural interests at the time.

6. No Sharp Lines Between the Periods. —This caution seems necessary lest some one should fail to note the variation in the development of individuals. Any attempt to name the exact year in which a particular function becomes active in any individual child is apt to be misleading. In that case any training based on such naming would either be useless or disastrous. The best that can be done is what is attempted in this chapter: to give about the average age at which the various powers become practically present.

While the exact time of appearance is not absolutely fixed, the exact order in which the child powers unfold is infallible in nature. It is well also to remember that no human faculty starts up at any time full-fledged. Powers grow imperceptibly, but they ripen into working maturity rather suddenly. The reflexive life passes noiselessly, gradually, and unobserved into intelligent life, and this again in the same manner into full ethical life. There is dawn before the full day; we do not know exactly when dawn becomes day, there is a short period of doubt and uncertainty, but we do know for the larger part of the dawn that it is only dawn, and after a short period of uncertainty we do know definitely that the day has come. Likewise, the exact moment, month, or even year when particular powers arise may not be known, but after a short period of uncertainty they give us unmistakable evidence of their presence. All this if we are intelligent and observant.

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS INSTINCT

Comenius, the Moravian bishop, was doubtless right when he said that the germs of knowledge, virtue, and religion are in us at birth, and develop with our lives. In other words, our lives tend to unfold along the line of certain native tendencies or instincts. Modern learning, in many branches, presents religion as one of the most persistent of human instincts. The study of religion as an instinct will bring us closer to nature's heart, and will thus prepare us for more efficient religious training.

1. What is Instinct?—Professor William James defines instinct as "The faculty of acting in such a way as to produce certain ends without previous education in the performance."[1] Instincts abound in animal life. Every organ in the animal body seems to be accompanied with a native aptitude for its proper use. These aptitudes or instincts sometimes lead to actions by the animal which seem almost to require intelligence for their explanation. P. A. Chadbourne thus

[1] *Elements of Psychology*, vol. ii, p. 383.

presents this correlation between organ and instinct: "Has the bird a gland for the secretion of oil? She knows instinctively how to press the oil from the gland and apply it to the feather. Has the silkworm the function of secreting the fluid silk? At the proper time she winds the cocoon, such as she has never seen, as thousands before her have done; and thus without instruction, pattern, or experience, forms a safe abode for herself in the period of transformation. Has the hawk talons? She knows by instinct how to wield them effectively against the helpless quarry."[1]

Instinctive actions are always of a reflex type in the beginning. They arise spontaneously upon the presentation of the proper stimuli. In animal instinct the reflexive type of action prevails. The instinct leads to this or that line of action, without any intelligent end in view. Thus the cat runs after the mouse the moment it is in sight, she flees from a dog, or shows fight if he is too close, and she avoids falling from trees not because she has any distinct notion of preserving life. No such ideal notions have entered her cat-brain. She is a mouser by nature, it is an instinct; and when that particular thing called a mouse appears in her field of vision she must pursue, and when that barking thing called a dog appears she must

[1] *Instinct*, p. 28.

either flee or show fight. The animal's life is largely an hereditary fatalism controlled by such instincts.

During the early infancy of the human being the case is not far different. Human instincts are fewer and not so perfectly developed at birth. They seem, as a rule, to be more plastic; as if they were made to be more easily changed and molded by the will of the individual and the training of those who regulate his surroundings for him in early life. The life required in a human being is so varied and complex, and the same nerves, muscles, and members have to be used in so many different ways, that such fatalistic instincts as those possessed by the animals would have doomed him to a lower grade of life. The young animal, therefore, excels in his instinctive outfit the young child. A young chick runs about, hunts his own food, and looks into the face of the sky during his first day of life; while the young baby requires weeks to learn to hold his head erect, and years pass before he can hunt his own food. But the powerful instinctive outfit at birth proves to be no mark of superiority in the end. The young animal goes on doing the same few, simple things all his life, while the human being, starting with a few plastic reactions, rises higher and still higher in the grade of life.

Still, the human being is born with certain well-defined reactions or instincts. Professor William James enumerates twenty-four. Others do not find so many. The difference in enumeration arises in the different ways in which race habits are traced back to their source. Some trace many such habits back to one native reaction, others require an instinct for each separate race peculiarity.

It is not at all necessary to the notion of instinct that it should be actively present immediately after birth, or in fact at any other period of life. On such a principle our instincts would be few indeed. The child's capacity to receive impressions from the environment increases with his unfolding powers; hence many instinctive reactions are compelled to wait a considerable time for their first opportunity of reaction. The real wait is for the proper stimuli. Other instincts seem to react long before they react in such a manner as to give us any mark of their activity. Religion falls in this class.

So we find an ascending series of instincts, the lower and simpler awakening first and the higher later. Professor James names "suckling" as the first instinctive action, and says it is nearly perfect at birth. The series ascends until he names intelligent love as the twenty-fourth and last. Now, this high reaction is not in the least degree present until two or three years after birth, and reaches but slender maturity before adolescence. Nevertheless love is one of the strongest of human instincts. The mere time when an instinct first visibly reacts has little to do in settling its really instinctive character. That which is generally true of the race under certain conditions bears the infallible mark of an instinct.

2. Religion is Properly Classed as an Instinct.—With the above notions of instinct and the previous definition of religion clearly in mind we will easily see that religion is one of the strongest and most persistent of human instincts. Church ritual, symbols of worship, and theological doctrines are not instinctive. Only the native impulse which leads us under proper stimuli to reverence and worship a Supreme Being is instinctive. This impulse may exist in the lower as well as the higher forms of worship and service. Men have worshiped some strange objects as representatives of the Supreme Being. They have bowed before the sun, moon, trees, stones, cows, snakes, and human beings. Finally, with clear spiritual ideal, they have stood before the Almighty, spiritual, Father. The prompting impulse, in all these alike was the religious instinct. Religion, then, is not the result of superstition, nor an artificial product foisted upon us

by a self-seeking, unscrupulous priesthood. It is a constituent part of universal human nature—the result of a race instinct.

(1) *Not Active Except Under Proper Stimulus.*—None of our instincts are self-active. Their action awaits the touch of the appropriate stimulus. The religious instinct is no exception. Happily, God has so circumstanced the human soul that we are never entirely without the stimuli calculated to awaken the religious impulse. Even in earliest infancy, when there is no apparent response on the child's part to any earthly stimuli, it is not rank superstition to believe that God is with the soul in his own way and the soul responds in its own way. The stimuli that awaken the religious instinct in us are in their order as follows: God's presence, nature, the Church, religious activity, and the Bible.

In our investigation of the rise of religion in the child we have too largely overlooked the most important factor—the presence of God with the infant soul. He is there as an active stimulus, seeking to enter into loving relationship with the child as his powers to respond gradually unfold. He does not await any action on the child's part—emotional, intellectual, or instinctive—he takes the initiative, and he takes it as soon as the child can make the least response. No mother ever hovered over her child as tenderly, lovingly, and constantly as God hovers round the infant spirit.

In the beginning the religious responses are purely reflexive—biological, the scientist would say; they are on the plane of nature, uninfluenced by thought or will. God in the mystery of his spiritual nature touches the child soul, and the child reacts in a purely natural way. A little later nature appeals to the child in her mute but effective way; the child soul is inspired with awe and reverence in a thoroughly native way. About this same time the parents, or other human persons, becomes impressive stimuli in the child's soul, and the child reacts, but still in its purely biological way. When intelligence and will have arisen the church, the home, the Bible, and society find their place in arousing the religious nature of the child, and the child reacts; not in the same mechanical, biological way as before, for his manifestations are now more or less under control of his will, but still he reacts.

(2) *The Child Has No Ready-made Religious Ideas.*—In claiming that the child begins life with a religious instinct I am very far from teaching that he enters the world with a stock of "ready-to-use" religious ideas. Instinct supposes nothing of this kind. It is in all modern teaching that we enter life a bundle of capacities, tendencies, im-

pulses, instincts. These are embedded in the very structure of our brains, muscles, and nerves. We have possibilities, but no ready-made notions about anything. The new-born infant has no conscious knowledge of God whatsoever; but he has capacities and instincts which, under the stimuli with which God surrounds him, will form, in time, notions of God and of everything else about him.

The doctrine of intuitive ideas is an exploded doctrine. Nevertheless it served its purpose in leading the way to the clearer idea of our day; namely, that we are born with instinctive tendencies and powers which react, and in reacting form notions of a kind which is found throughout the race in more or less regularity. Those old champions of the faith, who in a past generation defended religion as one of man's intuitive ideas, were right in maintaining that religion has a place in man's innermost being. They were only mistaken in the weapons which they used in defense of this position. Our original religious outfit is not a stock of religious notions, but a tendency to reverence and worship under proper stimuli.

(3) *Universality of Religion is Proof that it is Instinctive.*—History and travel affirm the universality of religion. Plutarch says, "If you will take the trouble to travel through the world you

will find towns and cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without houses, without wealth, without money, without theaters, and places of exercise, but there was never seen by any man any city without temple or gods." Now and then in modern times some prejudiced traveler has announced some nation or tribe without a vestige of religion. Maturer knowledge of the real conditions has always changed the verdict, and one nation after another has been withdrawn from the supposed infidel list until the list is all gone. Hottentots, Kaffirs, Melanesians, have in turn given clear evidence that they are religious.

Modern science confirms the testimony of history that religion is a characteristic of all races and tribes of men. What is thus characteristic of all men in all times and tribes must be constitutional with the race; instinctive.

(4) *Sporadic Cases of Unbelief no Disproof that Religion is an Instinct.*—There is no nation of atheists. Unbelief exists only in individual cases. It is not natural, is never spontaneous. It is an aftergrowth. It is pathological. It is a morbid accident in the religious sphere. It is an unfortunate anomaly.

There is no infant atheist. During the first four or five years of life the child is purely spontaneous. The infant, if properly environed, lives out his natural self. The religious responses are as early as any other of their class, and as strong as any. The child feels and lives his religion in these early days, neither thinks nor reasons about it. When the period of self-conscious reasoning arrives he has religious responses, habits, and tendencies to be taken into account and considered. The religious instinct is found in every normal child. Its development and strength, or its perversion, will depend upon the character of the surroundings and training, but it is always there to begin with. We may help toward infidelity by neglect of training or by wrong training during the infancy period.

With the rise of self-conscious intelligence, at about four or five years of age, personally responsible unbelief begins to be possible, but no clearly developed cases appear before the adolescent period; for the reason that the mental powers have not reached decisive strength sufficient to reach such an august conclusion. Besides, from five to twelve the child is busy as a bee in gathering material—among the rest, religious ideas, truths, forms, and habits. At the same time he is growing more analytic, reflective, and critical.

With adolescence comes a sifting of everything. The youth appoints himself prosecutor, judge, and jury. The normal child, properly trained in previous periods, will carefully, even critically, sift and try his religious notions and habits; this is a perfectly natural, instinctive thing. Careful guidance and confidential help from his elders, however, will insure his safe emergence from the storm into settled religious habits and life for all time. If, however, the training has been vicious, or neglected during earlier periods, or the adolescent is wrongly dealt with, adolescence will be likely to end in a religious wreck. The result is either faint religiousness or total unbelief. This is the life history of honest atheism. It is, happily, a rare specimen, and is no argument whatever against the general religiousness of the race.

(5) *Child Religion Not Received by Mere Imitation.*—That the child receives much from the example and personal influence of the home and the church no sane person will deny. In fact, this truth is emphasized in this book. But the child's reception of these parental and community influences implies a native impulse or instinct to which they may appeal. A child cannot be taught, by imitation or otherwise, anything which he has no native faculty to know or susceptibility to feel. You cannot teach a dog the multiplication table, or a horse the truth about God. Neither could we make religious impressions on the child, or lead

him by example into religious acts, habits, ideas, and life, if he were not gifted by nature with a constitutional religious capacity or instinct.

Professor William James has truly said: "Without an equipment of native reactions on the child's part the teacher would have no hold whatever on the child's attention or conduct. You can take a horse to water but you cannot make him drink; and so you can take a child to the schoolroom but you cannot make him learn the new thing you wish to impart, except by soliciting him in the first instance by something which natively makes him react. He must take the first step himself. Imagine a child so lifeless as to react in no way to the teacher's appeals, and how can you possibly take the first step in his education?"[1]

Another great teacher clinches the thought of this section thus: "No extreme action can develop an empty mind, which has no law, nature, or direction, into anything. This would be to act on the void. Hence it is hopeless to look for the source of religious ideas in external experience alone. We must assume a germ of religious impulse in the soul in order to make religious development possible. But on the other hand, this germ is not self-sufficient. It develops only under the stimulus of inner and outer experience,

[1] *Talks to Teachers*, p. 39.

and unless under the criticism and restraint of intellect and conscience it develops into grotesque or terrible forms."[1]

(6) *Analytic Reason Not the Primal Source of Religion.*—The perennial mistake in religious thinking and teaching has been that of considering a human being solely or chiefly as an intellect or understanding; whereas he is a great deal more. He is will, conscience, emotion, impulse, instinct; and these are stronger factors in determining his actual life than the logical intellect. We are possessed of many thoughts, aspirations, feelings, and practical motives which are not logical deductions or speculative findings of our mental machines. They are rather biological products. They are natural outcomes of the life processes. They are fruits of nature when conditioned and surrounded in certain ways. Such are our automatic and instinctive functions. Such also are many of our controlling motives in life which await no logical basis, and in fact often transcend our highest reason. They are as natural as hands and feet. Intellect and reason are modifiers of these native biological reactions, but they are not their creators, nor their absolute rulers. Life precedes reason and is the deeper fact. Religion is an instinctive life. Reason, when of sufficient strength,

[1] B. P. Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 5.

may develop or retard, mold, and fashion this life, but it is not its creator in any sense.

Doctrinal statements and theological creeds are the result of analytic reason. They are the crystallization of our religious philosophy and speculative logic; but religion in the life-sense, as it is used in this book, is something deeper than any conclusion of our reason. It is a native life.

It is not an unusual thing to find a man whose speculations about religion are one thing and his real belief, feeling, and practice quite another. David Hume was a brilliant writer against the Christian faith. His mother died. His friend Boyle found him in tears and, learning the cause, expressed regret that the bereaved heart had not the consolations of the Christian faith. "Ah, my friend," replied Mr. Hume, "I throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet I do not think so differently from the rest of the world as you imagine." This tragic example of an experience that is more or less common shows clearly that our religious life is not originated by our reason nor absolutely under its control. The little unbelieving logic-chopper need not disturb us any more than the barking dog disturbs the moon.

(7) *The Imperfection of the Child's Religious Conceptions No Proof that Religion is Not In-*

stinctive.—The child's religious life begins in instinct. This is more or less developed in different individuals. At first it is necessarily void of understanding—merely reflexive. As the child's knowledge of other things grows so does his knowledge of religious things. Even his knowledge of God is a progressive unfolding.

There is no doubt that the child's notions of God are very different from those of the adult; very primitive and crude. Wide observations in this field lead me to the conclusion that the majority of little children find their first ideal of God in father or mother, generally in the father. Hence the notion of God is, more or less clearly, that of a big man in the skies. Professor Barnes carefully studied one thousand children, to find out their religious conceptions. He says, "With more than half of them God is a great and good man. He is so large that he could stand with his feet on the ground and touch the clouds with his arms. He is a man that has six hands and feet and eyes, or he is a huge being with numerous limbs spread all over the sky. Thus they try to work themselves up into the notions of his omnipresence, his omniscience, and his omnipotence." Here we see clearly, from actual cases, the crudeness of the child's religious notions at the beginning, and how they gradually grow and unfold into something higher and better as the child powers develop toward maturity. They finally reach the notions of spirituality, personality, and fatherhood.

Our physical functions are natural, and instinctively, but we see their growth from infancy to maturity. A similar progress from imperfection upward is seen in all our mental powers. So it is but the expected when we find that the religious life and, especially, the religious ideas of the child start with crudities and imperfections and only gradually reach the heights of ideal truth and perfection.

3. The Religious Instinct is Subject to Training.—We have seen that religion, while instinctive, does not come into the world full-grown. It grows and develops with the expanding life. Neither does religion because it is instinctive go on irresistibly to its appointed goal. Instinct and fatalism are not the same thing. Religion is one of the strongest of human instincts, but, like all other instincts, it grows into maturity and strength under proper treatment, or it becomes sickly and dies under neglect or abuse.

That the religious instinct may be kept under, weakened, perverted, or nourished and strengthened by the individual after the period of intelligent self-control has arrived no one will doubt, Without this power to mold and change our natural endowments we could not be responsible for our own lives and characters. The intellect fortified by the will largely holds the throttle after the intelligent period arises.

During the infancy period of child life the religious instinct is equally subject to training. Up to about five years of age this training devolves upon others, and for several years thereafter the responsibility does not rest entirely upon the child. Nevertheless this is a very important time for training—even the first five years.

All nature and science point to the tremendous importance of training to an instinct during its earliest period. Spaulding reports that if a chick is hatched in the absence of a hen its instinct to follow will lead it to follow any moving thing. Under normal conditions the little chick follows the hen and flees from other moving things, but in the first few days of their lives persistent effort will lead them to follow a man and flee from a hen. And if once so trained they will rarely, if ever, be at home with the mother hen. Spaulding also reports that he kept three chicks hooded until they were nearly four days old. When the hood was removed they dashed toward the windows in terror. He discovered that if unhooded during the first day of life they would nestle in his bosom.

What a difference in the instinct under different treatment. It nearly died in four days of neglect. A chick kept from the mother for ten days in seclusion could not be induced to go with her. If put under her at nightfall it stayed, in dread, during the night, but left with the first light of the morning. Farmers in the Adirondacks report that it is a really serious thing to let a cow wander off into the mountains and give birth to a calf, and remain there two or three weeks. By the end of that time the calf is wild as a deer, and in many instances cannot be captured without violence. But when the calf is accustomed, from the beginning, to seeing men about its attachment to them is soon very marked. These examples show how easily animal instinct is influenced during its early periods—how plastic to training.

Is human instinct so different from that of the animals that we may not learn a lesson as to the risk incurred by neglecting to train the religious instinct during the earliest years of child life? Surely not. Here we find explanation of the rebellion against all religious worship found often in children of five and six years of age. Even at that early day neglect to train the religious instinct has resulted in vitiating it. Here also is the explanation of the fact that so many persons who are converted at fifteen years of age or later in life are conscious of a feeling of unnaturalness in all their religious experiences. The natural basis of a religious life has been allowed to languish and almost die of neglect. To gain a natural, easy type of religion will take long habitual effort, if it ever reaches the state which would otherwise have come naturally.

The transitoriness of human instinct is very evident. It is seen in the rapid succession of different interests and passions as life goes on. With the child life is play, and fairy tales, and pictures. With the youth it becomes bodily exercise, social pleasure, and love. With the man ambition, acquisitiveness, and the feeling of responsibility have become uppermost. If any of these natural lines of interest and action are made impossible to the child at nature's appointed time, and the instinct is denied proper conditions for its development, it never becomes a part of the life. For instance, the child who is denied the usual grist of fairy tales when he has the instinctive longing for them will never again find it easy, if at all possible, to be interested in that class of literature. Again, the child who grows up alone, at the age when his social instincts crave companionship with others in games and sports, will in all probability be sedentary to the end of his life.

The greatest thing in all pedagogy is to strike when the iron is hot. Take the pupil at the high tide of his interest. There is a happy time in a pupil's life for teaching skill in drawing, for fixing the facts of history, for leading him into the intelligent study of nature, and finally the time is ripe for philosophy on every important topic. The important thing is to catch the wave of natural interest before it reaches its ebb.

The fact is that our instincts are implanted in us to give rise to habits. If our surroundings are proper our instincts soon embed themselves in life habits, and the instinct is thus supplanted while the purpose for which it was implanted is maintained by the life habit—which in turn passes into character. If neglected, or denied their proper conditions of growth, our instincts do not wait till some future time when they may fare better, but they quickly fade away. Here is a scientific warning to religious teachers.

Instinct is subject to training. If it went on to accomplish its purposes without any possible change from the influence of the environment, from the lives of others, and from the ordering of our own wills, it would be the most relentless fatalism; under such circumstances we would follow the bent of our native endowments with the same precision that the train follows the curve of the rails. But instinct is such a tractable thing during its early stages that it offers the golden opportunity for influencing acts, habit, and character for two worlds.

There is a sincere conviction that both home and church are too largely allowing to pass unused this golden period of opportunity for nurturing and training the religious instinct. The first five or six years of child life form this golden period. Our neglect of this period is the result of an impression that nothing can be done so early for the religious life of the child. Because we cannot yet teach the child theology, or fill him with the hard puzzles of the Catechism, we fall into the fatal error of supposing that the child soul is beyond our reach. In its golden period we allow the religious instinct to go without attention. We neglect to strike while the iron is hot. In many cases we pound hard and long after it has become cold, and get no result except blistered hands and a bleeding heart. We slept in summer, and so we are begging at barred doors in winter.

Even if the child is awakened and saved in later life, we do him an irreparable injury by neglecting religious impression during his early instinctive period. Religion will never be to such an one the same stable, natural, easy experience that it might otherwise have been. God implanted religion with the roots of our being, to grow under proper conditions equally with the other elements of our expanding life. It becomes by such a process bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. It thus becomes as vital a part of our constitution as our backbone—just as natural, and just as hard to dislodge. God does the planting, all right, in every normal child. He looks to home and church for proper care and training. Horace Bushnell said, "More can be done, or lost by neglect of doing, on a child's immortality in the first three years of his life than in all his years of discipline afterward."

CHAPTER III

SIN AND THE CHILD'S RELIGIOUS INSTINCT

THE growth and development of the instinctive religious life of the child is embarrassed and troubled by moral evil, or sin. There is a tendency in unregenerate human nature toward that which is bad. The Bible addresses man as a sinful being. It is needless to quote single texts of Scripture in proof of this fact, for it is everywhere written on the face of the Scriptures. The common moral judgment of the race and the everyday observation of life about us confirm the teachings of God's word on this subject.

It is true that some part of what is usually termed sin is more accurately classed as ignorance, imperfection, or immaturity. It is also true that a part of the responsibility must be set over against the doors of the parents of him who commits the sin, for they have made him largely what he is. But however modified, and wherever the responsibility may be placed, sin is a clearly observed characteristic of the race in its natural condition. How does this fact consist with the teaching that religion is natural and instinctive? We shall see.

1. "Original Sin."—The above phrase maintains its place in a few Church creeds, though the meaning now read into it is so different from that which it originally had that the propriety of its use is seriously questioned. These words originally stood for the guiltiness before God of every child born into the world. The hereditary taint of the nature and its bias to evil were believed to be guilty sin, and worthy of eternal death if the child died before regeneration. This nightmare of the theologians has, happily, passed away never to return. The only question to-day is whether we ought to retain the old phrase with a new meaning, or banish it with the error for which it stood. The consensus of opinion favors the latter.

In its strict sense the term sin is applicable only to overt acts of voluntary transgression. There is also a wider use in which, in addition to the above, it stands for the wrong state of the soul out of which evil acts spring. This latter use of the word is perfectly proper when we are speaking of adults, for in their case the depravity, for which they were not responsible in their infancy, has been continued and adopted as their own by free choice. With them depravity becomes guilty sin.

Sin, in any strict sense, is impossible to the infant. The child enters life with a disordered moral nature, no doubt about that, but it lacks the determinative element of sin. Sin only becomes possible when sufficient intelligence and free will have arisen to make possible a real choice of a wicked act instead of a good one, or of a bad character instead of a good one. Hence no infant guilt or sin.

2. Hereditary Depravity.—This is the accepted phrase to describe the disorder which is native in the moral nature of every child. It avoids the ancient error that the child is born a guilty sinner because of the nature he inherits. It gives prominence to heredity, which is known to be a great factor in life. It rightly points us to the beginning of the race for the origin of our bias to evil. There was an "original sin," namely, that committed by Adam. This original sin left a taint in the nature of the one who committed it, and this has been transmitted from generation to generation by the force of heredity.

Depravity does not become sin until it is intelligently and freely chosen, and adopted as his own, by one who has reached the years of responsibility. No man is a sinner except the man who has sinned. No man can transmit sin to another by heredity or otherwise. Depravity is a tendency that leads toward sin, but it is not sin. It makes sin easy, but does not make it necessary—either in the adult or in the child under proper influences.

Through the grace of God, and under proper training, it may be neutralized and practically destroyed before the child reaches the time of full personal responsibility; or it may be so far overcome that when the time of full responsibility arrives the child will, with its first fully responsible choice, choose the higher instead of the lower—the service of God instead of that of the evil one or of self.

Thus we conclude that the child is born depraved though not a sinner. This truth must be firmly held: the evil bent is present. The moral nature of the child is such that unless checked or changed it will inevitably show a bent toward sin when the opportunity arrives. The natural result will be, if left alone, a sinful character and life. We shall later see that depravity is not perfect in its work of tainting the springs of action, but alongside of perversion of nature toward evil we yet see many signs that nature retains enough of moral health to give many responses that are pure and good when she is properly environed and surrounded. Now, our impulses are such, the force of training is such, and the elements of character are such that, under the grace of God, the evil bias of depravity may be displaced and practically destroyed by the persistent development in the child of that which is good and religious. Before the years of full moral responsibility, of course, the accomplishment of so desirable an end will depend largely upon the prayerful, intelligent, persistent effort of the parents. After full moral responsibility appeal must be made to the will of the subject. The change must now be intelligent, conscious, and freely chosen. Here we find another mark of the tremendous importance of religious training during the earliest periods of child life.

3. THE DEGREE OF DEPRAVITY. (1) *Is it Total?*—Depravity is total in the sense that it affects every part of the being: physical, moral, and religious. It is also total in the sense that the depraved being, if left to himself, has no means of recovery. But that any human being starts in life all bad is unthinkable. Along with the evil much that is good is transmitted to us by heredity. The prodigal did but "come to himself" when he determined to go to the father's house. His own better self finally got the upper hand. Depravity brought in discord—a division and confusion of motives and tendencies—with a natural bias toward the evil, but there is left in us something to which the good and the religious still appeal. Were it not so our cases would be hopeless.

Just what the race would become if left to itself we have no means of determining, for the reason that it has never been so left. God seeks from the earliest period of infancy to lead every soul into the way of right. He thus counteracts the multiplying forces of evil. Then that complex web of influences which we term the environment must be counted as continually neutralizing the bias to evil. The tendencies within are continually modified from without. So in actual life wickedness is never absolute and depravity is never total. No child, no adult is all bad.

(2) *Is it Equal in Different Individuals?*—This is a question of some practical importance. The heredity of acquired characteristics is now generally accepted. According to this teaching we inherit not only the general characteristics of the race but also the special traits acquired by our immediate ancestors during their lifetime. It follows that the degree of depravity differs greatly in different individuals, as some families have so much more to transmit than others. Dr. James Mudge says, "Some inherit much more depravity than others because coming from a worse stock."[1]

(3) *May it be Increased or Decreased?*—Yes; either. Previous to the period of intelligent choice the child is modified by two factors: the direct intercourse of the Spirit of God, and the environment. After the arrival of this important

[1] *Growth in Holiness*, p. 67.

period—somewhere between eight and twelve years of age—free will becomes an important factor. The Spirit of God is an invariable factor toward decreasing the bias to evil. He works with the infant spirit in a way mysterious to us, but none the less real. The environment and training of the child in this early period may be such as to cooperate with the Spirit of God and, by continually calling forth and nourishing the best that is in the child nature, neutralize or destroy altogether the hereditary evil. Such teaching is in harmony with all that we know of our native tendencies and the forces that modify them. That there is hid away in us in some indefinite place a lodgment of evil which nothing can touch, until, after a siege of sinning, the adult soul comes with deep repentance, is in harmony neither with common sense nor with the teaching of revelation. Depravity is not a concrete lodgment of evil in our moral natures, it is a perverted tendency of our natural powers, of our impulses and instincts. This perversion, especially in its earlier stages, may be supplanted under godly training by the good and pure. Children are fearfully imitative. This characteristic of the child gives his religious surroundings a very marked value early in life, and is a great factor in modifying the inherited depravity. Imitation leads to concrete acts that are good, these acts in turn crystallize into habits, and habits at last become embedded in permanent character.

During this early stage of child life the child is largely passive; the increase or decrease of his depravity, as of every other inherited tendency, depends wholly upon forces outside himself. But the coming of intelligent choice marks a great change. The child must now be appealed to as a free, self-determinative agent. If he choose to continue the bias to evil, and give way to it, it will grow and increase. No training can now neutralize and supplant the depravity of his nature, unless it gain the cooperation of the freewill being himself. The Spirit of God, the parents, the Church, and all other agencies, must now make their appeal to the sovereign will of the child.

An evil life will greatly increase the inherited tendency to evil by suppressing the better self and developing the lower self. Such a course results in a continually increasing bias to the wrong.

4. Depraved Children of Pious Parents.—The offspring of even the most saintly and mature Christians are born depraved. This fact is generally admitted. How this can be is a puzzling question. Do the parents transmit something which they do not themselves possess? John

Wesley gave an explanation by saying, "Sin is entailed upon me, not by immediate generation, but by my first parent." Blame it all on Adam! But how did Adam reach Mr. Wesley if not through his own parents? Dr. John Miley sought a way out of the difficulty by stating that the regenerate state is a state of grace, not a part of the original constitution, and hence not transmissible through natural generation. This fails to explain, because it is not a question of the transference of personal innocence or merit, which comes through grace, but of an acquired nature or state. However the latter originates, it becomes ours and is transmitted to our descendants. The only sufficient reason why no child is born free from depravity is that no parents are wholly free from it. The last vestiges of depravity will not be destroyed until resurrection glory restores us to the full image of God. Dr. D. D. Whedon says, "Our inherited depravity is not entirely removed by regeneration until the regeneration is completed at the resurrection."[1] Dr. Raymond takes a similar position.

The plain facts stand out against all theories. Saintly parents in all degrees of grace do, without exception, bring into the world children of more or less depraved nature. Alongside of this we

[1] *Statements Theological and Critical*, p. 320.

put the common sense principle that parents cannot transmit to their children something which they did not possess—unless it be by the law of atavism, which will be explained later. In short, this theory is that individuals often inherit characteristics which are not visible in their parents but which were very marked in grandparents or some more remote ancestors. There may be sufficient explanation in this, but atavism is such a rare thing that it does not fully account for the constantly recurring cases to be explained. The fact is that sin has been such a race characteristic that it has become almost as deeply embedded in our natures as our constitutional characteristics themselves. Not one generation of good living, and perhaps not many, will so eradicate it that it will no longer be a part of the child's inheritance.

5. The Root Principle of Depravity and Sin.—Surely it is by haphazard that we treat a disease when we do not know its real nature. The finding of this root principle and holding it clearly in mind seems a necessity to any intelligent training intended to eliminate it.

In its last analysis sin is the supreme choice of self instead of God as the object of love and service. In our original constitution our tastes, impulses, tendencies were so formed and poised that God occupied the place of supreme love, trust, and service. Self usurped this high place, and disorder, perversion, wrong tendency, and a bias to evil were the result. The essence of depravity is this bias to self. The evil discernible in a child before the years of responsibility is easily seen to spring from this root of selfishness. The most guilty forms of sin during adult years are easily traced to this same supreme selfishness.

In harmony with the above, Dr. Samuel Harris says, "Selfishness in the form of self-sufficiency is the primitive seed or root of all sin."[1] In similar vein Dr. W. N. Clarke says, "Sin is the placing of self-will or selfishness above the claims of love and duty."[2] This view of sin harmonizes with the teaching of Scripture, the revelations of our own experience, and the observations of the life of others.

Depravity or sin is not, then, some entity, perhaps moral filth, deposited within our being and to be washed away by some indescribable literal washing. All language of Scripture capable of such interpretaton must be figurative. The psychological view of sin is the true one. We never do a deed nor think a thought but there is a change of form in brain substance accompanying it. Repetition of the same thought or deed ren-

[1] *God, Creator and Lord of All*, vol. ii, p. 194.
[2] *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 235.

ders these brain changes increasingly easy. Finally they are so inwrought with our habits that they become spontaneous, and when this stage is reached they have become a part of our permanent character. At birth the brain substance is in a specific form, and reacts in specific, appropriate ways. These ways of reaction we call our inherited instincts or tendencies. So, after all, our inheritance from our ancestors is little more than certain specific forms of brain substance calculated to react in specific ways. Depravity is transmitted to us in a disordered brain substance. We inherit a tendency or impulse to react more readily to those stimuli which promote the interests of self than to those which lead to the love, trust, and service of God. By our own lives—our thoughts, our deeds—we deepen and render permanent these perversions, or we eradicate and supplant them.

6. Effect of Depravity and Sin on the Persistency and Strength of the Religious Instinct.—The question here is, Does the inherited depravity of the child neutralize, pervert, or destroy his constitutional tendency to worship God? If depravity were total and absolute there could be but one answer: Depravity would be the utter destruction of the religious instinct; self would be the only object of worship; God would be forgotten. But we have seen that depravity is X

not total in any such sense. Depravity leads rather to a divided life than to a life all bad. The tendency to love and serve self is deeply embedded, but the tendency to love and serve God still persists. The latter, in fact, is the more persistent. It may be relegated to the rear by a perversion of our original constitution, but still it is there.

Here we should remember, first, that religion is a part of man's original constitution. As such it has the same persistency as our other constitutional elements. Depravity is a modifying force, a perversion, a wrong tendency, but not destructive of the racial instinct and impulse of worship. The persistency of the religious instinct is one of the special messages of this book. God so counteracts the inherited depravity that every child born into the world has that in him which responds to proper training and which develops a religious, godly life when so trained. It must be so. It is always safe to appeal to a child's religious impulse, for it is certainly there. The appeal must be made in a manner suited to the age and interests of the child, but when so made it is sure of a response.

The religious instinct is a deeper and more important fact than many others which have received much larger treatment in the religious realm. Sin, repentance, regeneration, and a long line of such, are only subsidiaries. Sin stands for a calamity which overtook the religious life of the race. Repentance, regeneration, etc., are steps in the process of recovery from this calamity, but the religious instinct is the primary fact which underlies them all. In other words, sin is the boy's headlong fall into the mud, repentance and regeneration are steps in his uplifting and cleansing; but the religious instinct is the boy himself. Indeed it is only when all sin has been removed that the religious instinct is seen in its fullness and glory.

It is the nature of a tree to grow in a specific way when under proper conditions. If vermin attack its leaves or roots they may seriously modify its growth, and if allowed to persist may finally kill it. The removal of the vermin is a necessity to the proper growth of the tree, but the natural life of the tree is the deeper fact. The vermin and their destruction form only an incident in the life history of the tree. So the religiousness of the race is the deeper fact, while sin, and recovery therefrom, are only incidents in its life history.

A second fact to be remembered here is that God has never left the depraved soul without the presence of his Spirit to counteract the bias of depravity. What moral havoc and religious ruin depravity would have worked in the race, had not the presence of God been continually with every child born into the world, we have no means of determining. His presence has prevented the shades of depravity from thickening into dense darkness. His presence has prevented the forces of evil from crushing out the natural religiousness of the race. God's presence meets every dawning human life in such a way as to so far neutralize and counteract the bias and disorder of depravity that the new immortal has free opportunity, under proper training and environment, to trust God, feel his presence, choose his service, and live in communion with him.

We may now note the particular effects of depravity on the religious instinct.

(1) Depravity, while it has not destroyed the natural religiousness of the race, has weakened, perverted, and degraded it. Man everywhere worships, but his worship is often weak, perverted, and low. Sin put itself largely in the place of God. The world's ideas of God descended to a low plane. Only hazy notions of God finally remained, and in many places men worshiped God through some bestial object suggested by their own lusts. History shows that the race is now slowly recovering from this religious degradation,

and is going on to clearer notions of God and purer forms of spiritual worship. The turning of the tide is very noticeable since the coming of Christ.

(2) The influence of depravity in modifying the religious instinct is particularly strong during the early period of childhood. Then the child is living out his inner self without fear or favor. His religious life is on the lower, naturalistic plane. He even passes through some stages which show perversions of the instinct to worship. He is on the edge of idolatry for a considerable period. His religious notions come only gradually into the light. We have seen that the race was plunged into religious perversion through the entrance of sin, and is only gradually coming up into clear, spiritual light and life. Each child seems to repeat in this particular the history of the race. Hence we must look for the most emphatic perversions of the religious instinct during the early period of childhood.

CHAPTER IV

CONVERSION AND THE CHILD'S RELIGIOUS LIFE

No attempt is here made at a full treatment of conversion, or at the clearing away of all mystery from the subject. Let us be content if we can get such a practical life view of the essential principles involved as will prepare us to act wisely in our efforts at religious training.

1. "Infant Regeneration."—Theologians of a past generation gave this title to their doctrine that the grace of God so fully counteracts hereditary depravity in the irresponsible child that it really amounts to "Infant Regeneration." It was doubtless an extreme view, and was a natural rebound from the Calvinistic teaching that infants are guilty sinners and worthy of eternal damnation. In order to justify their common sense belief that those who die in infancy go to heaven, Arminian theologians thought it necessary to believe that, through some unknown and mystic process, the infant became regenerate. Whatever their parentage, whatever their surroundings and training, this mystic change took place. John Wesley, John Fletcher, and writers

on theology of even a generation ago, insisted on this doctrine.

Later writers on this subject have avoided the use of the term regeneration in relation to the state of the infant. That word is used in Scripture normally for adults. The gist of what the early Arminian fathers contended for is now generally accepted, even while their phraseology is rejected. It goes without challenge that infants are brought by the grace of God into such a state that, dying in infancy, they go to heaven. It is further believed that the grace of God, in cooperation with proper religious training, does gradually overcome and supplant in the irresponsible infant the hereditary bias to evil; so that the child emerges into responsible life unprejudiced toward evil, if not really in a state of grace identical with regeneration in the adult. But such a state, it will be observed, is not an unconditional and inevitable result of the grace of God in the infant soul. It is conditioned upon the proper discharge of the responsible duty of religious training by the parents or others. In case these duties are not properly discharged the depravity persists in force, and may even be increased when the child emerges into responsible life.

We fully join in the general belief that those who die in infancy go to heaven. We stick a peg down there. If any bending is necessary in our theological system it must be at some other point. As to what becomes of the depravity of the dying infant we have no very exact doctrine. We simply believe that God somewhere, and in some way consistent with both justice and love, makes whatever change is necessary in the nature of the young immortal before he enters the heavenly home.

We base our confidence that the dying infant gets to heaven, not on the ground that all infants are by the grace of God brought into a regenerate state, but on a belief that the infant is not, in a personal sense, responsible for the existence of depravity in him, and hence cannot be condemned or punished without the direst injustice. Here two facts must be constantly kept in mind: first, the depravity of the infant is a mere hereditary bias for which he is in no sense responsible. The second fact is that the infant's powers are so immature that he is free from any personal blame in not ridding himself of the depravity bias. At a later stage of life, if he allows it to continue, he will be blameworthy. This stage is reached when the powers of intellect, free will, and the feeling of personal responsibility have reached a working maturity. This occurs somewhere between eight and twelve years of age, or earlier. Then, if he chooses the evil that is in him, adopts it, and makes it his own, or refuses to get rid of it in the appointed way, he becomes a guilty sinner. Up to this period the child has been no more responsible for his depravity than he has for a deformed limb, or a crooked nose, with which his heredity may have afflicted him. Hence, whatever our conception of the plan necessary to get rid of the depravity inherent in the dying infant, it is not at all necessary that we invent the doctrine of infant regeneration in order to bolster up our belief that such an infant gets to heaven. This faith needs no such bolstering.

2. Natural Times and Types of Child Conversion.—It is now less than a dozen years since Professor E. D. Starbuck published his *Psychology of Religion* and set forth a theory of conversion in which he claimed that this supernatural change occurred normally at a particular period of life. By the study of actual cases he found that conversion is confined almost entirely to the period between ten and twenty years of age, 10–2
the great majority of conversions falling between 12–1
twelve and sixteen. This, as is well known, is the time of the greatest physical and mental change in the life of a human being. It is the transitional, adolescent period. Dr. G. Stanley Hall has termed it the time of a "physical and mental new birth." From these facts Professor Starbuck concluded

that the physical and mental changes, then occurring, make this the natural period for conversion, and that there is some natural connection and causal relation between the physical, mental, and religious changes then occurring. This was the first serious attempt to find a natural time for the occurrence of conversion.

Extended study on the part of many investigators since Professor Starbuck published his conclusions has only tended to confirm his theory and to give it a much wider application. Other epochs in the natural development of the child are seen to have profound religious significance. These natural changes are not in the least sense conversion or any other religious epoch, but they furnish the natural time for the occurrence of these great religious changes. We still believe that only God can work these great changes in the human soul, but we believe, as never before, that he works through natural means and in harmony with nature's seasons.

3. Conversion in a Limited Sense is Possible Before the Time of Full Moral Responsibility.—Full moral responsibility does not arise before ten or twelve years of age: it comes about the time of adolescence. There are epochal changes in child life previous to ten or twelve. At three or four the child passes through one of

these epochs. Self-consciousness then becomes a practical factor; intelligence has arisen, and a clearer perception of things in general marks this period of life. A change in the child's religious career naturally accompanies these physical and natural changes. A wonderful change may be easily observed in the child's religious capacities and life. From being irresponsive, by words, to our religious instruction, he suddenly develops surprising interest in this part of his training. His own use of language has become exact enough to make it a factor in revealing himself to us. He becomes responsive to nature about him, and it speaks to him of God and religious things. This change is so epochal that some have called it a natural conversion. We fully recognize the revolutional change which then takes place, but prefer to reserve the word conversion for the supernatural change which is wrought in the adult.

But before the years of full moral responsibility there is a religious change possible, and in many cases actual, which in a limited sense is worthy of being called conversion. It is the gradual change in the nature of the child, wrought directly by the Spirit of God in cooperation with prayerful, intelligent, persistent training on the part of the parents and others, whereby the tendency of the depraved nature is overcome and supplanted by a tendency to that which is good. This change is not a merely human affair, but is wrought by the Spirit of God utilizing to the farthest extent human effort. It is not of works, but of grace. Such a possibility brings immense responsibility to the parent, but along with it great opportunity also.

This change is none the less divine because it is gradual. It may be complete by the fifth year, or perhaps not before the tenth or twelfth; or it may even then require earnest, persistent effort on the child's own part, with his mature powers, before the hereditary bias to evil is fully overcome and supplanted. But let us remember that, although so slowly wrought, it is none the less accomplished only by the power and grace of God.

This is not a new notion. It is only an old thought put in the dress of modern thought. It is infant regeneration in a way consistent with our knowledge of human nature and the way in which it may be changed. It seems to us more in harmony with both Scripture and the best reason than the idea of baptismal regeneration. Mr. Wesley believed in baptismal regeneration for infants, and speaks of the possibility of "losing the grace received in baptism" by willful sin when the years of responsibility have come. Those who hold to this doctrine believe that the change is wrought suddenly through the sacrament of baptism, while we, disclaiming any ground in Scripture or reason for such a doctrine, hold that it is in harmony with reason, if not a matter of revelation, that through the grace of God, fortified by proper training, the natural tendency to evil may be overcome and supplanted by a tendency to the good.

Dr. D. D. Whedon has left a paragraph of unusual interest on the subject of this section. He says: "There are, as experience shows, those who need no conversion; happy but rare cases in which Christian nurture and the Spirit's influence have so blended as to precede and preclude what Mr. Wesley calls the 'loss of the grace received in baptism,' or, as some would say, the grace received before baptism, of which baptism is but the outward sign and seal. O that Church spirituality and parental piety were strong enough to make this the rule and not the exception."[1] Now, Dr. Whedon was a strong advocate of "infant regeneration." In the light of this fact the above passage presents this line of thought: Every infant receives at an early stage, perhaps at birth, an unconditioned regeneration flowing from Christ's atonement; then the Spirit's influence and parental training may be such in the years that follow that

[1] *Statements Theological and Critical*, p. 316.

at the years of responsible life the child will need no regeneration—the infant regeneration having been retained. We reject as gratuitous the notion of infant regeneration, but believe that it is in harmony with all the facts involved that the operation of the Spirit of God blended with wise and careful religious training will bring about the same blessed state as that intended in infant regeneration. That is to say, the stream of good impulse, which is inherent in every child's nature along with the stronger stream of evil, may be so strengthened and enlarged by proper training, blessed by the Spirit of God, that the evil will become the quiescent tendency and the good the prevalent one, with the natural result that the good becomes embedded in habit and character for life.

This is properly termed conversion in a limited sense for the reason that some important elements of our full notion of conversion are absent. There is, of course, an absence of all those elements which can only be furnished by the child who has reached full moral responsibility, such as a clear notion of sin and a free moral choice of the right and the good. Notwithstanding this limitation, here is a field of blessed privilege for the parents and the Church which has been too largely overlooked. God gives the child a long infancy in order that wise training may control the preparation for his life work. His physical, mental, and religious development are, each and all, beyond his own control. Parents have more largely recognized their responsibility for the physical and mental training than they have for the religious training. Have we not been long enough "locking the stable after the horse is stolen"?

Many actual cases lead to the conclusion that the natural time for the culmination of this type of conversion is in connection with the radical changes which occur in child life somewhere between three and five years of age. This is the 35
time when self-consciousness becomes comparatively complete, when reflex life changes to intelligent life. There is at least an epochal change in religious response natural at this period. May it not be the completion of the gradual work of the eradication of evil which has been gradually going on in the preceding years? How glorious to think of a plan of salvation which provides that in our first self-conscious moment we should find ourselves free from the evil of depravity and in loving fellowship with God! I believe that this is the kind of salvation we have in Christ. A stilted theology, producing neglect of proper parental nurture and care during the earliest infant years, has kept us too largely from its realization.

4. Adolescent Conversion.—We have seen in a previous section of this chapter that the great majority of conversions occur during the adolescent period. From twelve to sixteen is the golden period in all the churches for the gathering of members. This season seems to be appointed by nature for this very purpose. In a general way we have always looked upon youth as the proper time to seek conversion and enter upon a religious life, but the importance of making use of this as God's appointed harvest time was never so clearly seen as to-day.

(1) *The Radical Change in the Experience of the Christian Child During Adolescence.*—What does adolescence mean to the youth who reaches it in a really religious state? If the child has been so favorably situated that God's grace, blended with proper training, has supplanted the inherited depravity, does the coming of the adolescent ferment have any special importance? In a general way it may be said that adolescence is a time of storm and stress for every child. The adolescent has a mass of new powers, physical, mental, and religious, and he scarcely knows how to use them or what to do with them. With his new powers the adolescent has a new native instinct to test everything and to look for the foundations. This has not been his previous attitude. The wise

Creator who planned our lives made us largely plastic creatures during the first ten or twelve years of life, and so situated us that we are largely molded and influenced without our own consent, but he also decreed that at ten or twelve we should arise in our personal strength and assume control of our own destinies. So we see the religious adolescent searching carefully and critically the stock of religious ideas which he has gathered, testing in a serious way the religious feelings and habits which have been cultivated under the authority and guidance of others. What will he do with them? If his previous training has been wise and natural his religious responses will be found to be so real, so much a part of himself, that he will not seriously consider parting with them. But if the training has been unnatural or unwise, or so neglected as to be incoherent and incomplete, he will, most likely, permanently discard religious things.

The child who reaches adolescence a Christian properly trained may have some storm and stress during this trying period, but if properly looked after he will come forth settled and fixed in his religious habits and character for life. At this period he is in the business of making life-choices, and every fiber of his being and every element of his previous life leads him toward Christ and his service. He issues from the storm and stress a new creature physically, mentally, and religiously.

The child who reaches adolescence a Christian still has great need of very special care and help during its trying ordeal. It is well for us to be prepared beforehand to find him as he is. If he is severely critical, let us not take it as a thing unheard of or desperately wicked. If he is hard to approach, and unpleasantly independent and self-satisfied, let us not put him down as a reprobate. It is only nature manifesting itself. He will be better after he gets over these things. Professor George A. Coe says: "It would be entirely in place to enter a plea for the understanding of childhood, or of mature life, or of old age; but all these are better understood and cared for than the remaining period of life—adolescence."[1] This is all the more urgent when we remember that no more ruinous feeling ever possesses the adolescent than that he is not understood by those who are in authority over him.

The adolescent's need of help is all the more urgent because he has entered into a virtually new world and has no previous experience of his own to guide him. He has new sensations, emotions, modes of thought, appetites, temptations, problems of duty, meanings of life, and mysteries of

[1] *The Spiritual Life*, p. 56.

religion. Is it strange that in this labyrinth of new experiences he needs a guiding hand?

Be it understood that we do not give the term conversion to this period of religious storm and stress through which the Christian child passes at adolescence, but the experience is so radical that it seems proper to give it special attention here. Conversion in the limited sense has gradually taken place in the previous years. The element of conversion, lacking up to this time, is now supplied. This element is free, personal choice. The child does now freely and fully accept, choose, and adopt as his own the religious beliefs, feelings, habits, and life which have been brought to him by the grace of God blended with proper training. This is a blessed radical change, but it is not a return after wandering, nor a transformation of the moral nature through grace, and hence not a conversion; only a purely natural change.

(2) *Adolescence is Nature's Appointed Time for the Conversion of Those Who Reach that Period in Religious Waywardness.*—Interesting investigations have been made in reference to the frequency of conversions during the adolescent period. Professor George A. Coe found that of the 776 graduates of Drew Theological Seminary the average age of conversion was 16.4 years. Professor E. G. Lancaster investigated 518 mis-

cellaneous cases and found that nearly every one had religious inclinations between twelve and twenty. Of 526 officers of the Y. M. C. A. the average age of conversion was 16. Of 84 awakenings which led to conversion Professor Coe found that 3 occurred at 7 years of age, 1 at 8, 1 at 9, 4 at 10, 3 at 11, 8 at 12, 10 at 13, 3 at 14, 6 at 20, 1 at 21, 2 at 22, and 1 at 24—an average age of 15.4 years.

These facts show us that the physical and mental upturnings of the adolescent period make it a peculiarly favorable time for religious impressions, and for life decisions in this all-important matter. This conclusion fits into Scripture teaching, which assures us that "to everything there is a season." It likewise agrees with the latest teaching of the best pedagogy, which makes clear that the door is wide open at each stage of human life for some particular thing which nature particularly craves and which can never be so well done later, if done at all. It also accords with the latest psychology, where we are taught that our impulses and instincts ripen in a certain order, and if the proper objects are provided at the proper time habits of conduct and character are formed which last for life; but if neglected the impulse dies out and our most earnest efforts meet with no response.

There is a religious awakening which naturally accompanies the adolescent ferment. The all-wise Creator has made this open door in the wall of human life where those interested in the religious welfare of the child, if they have not measured up to the ideal during previous years, may enter and do effective work. The religious awakenings of this period arise from many different sources—as different as the endowments, temperaments, surroundings, and training of the individual children. (*a*) Sometimes this awakening seems to be purely spontaneous. It arises as naturally as any of the mental or physical changes of this period. The Spirit of God is doubtless operative in such cases, but there appears to be no human agency. No one solicits the child to be a Christian, no revival influences sourround him, but he begins to hunger and thirst after spiritual things. The case is recorded of a young girl who as she walked in a neighbor's garden was suddenly possessed of the thought that she had "passed from death unto life." There had been no apparent preparation for such a thought and experience, and no particular thrill of emotion accompanied it, but for life she was firmly convinced that that moment in the garden was the time of her conversion. This is a spontaneous awakening of the tragical sort. (*b*) Cases are not rare of persons who enter adolescence in waywardness, and during its stress and storm pass through no particular religious emotions, yet when the storm is subsiding find themselves in a right relation to God and enter heartily upon his service for life. (*c*) A larger class than either of the preceding receive proper instruction and training in religious matters, and without any tragical disturbance of their emotional life do fully and freely choose Christ and his service, becoming gradually conscious of the peace of God and the joy of salvation. This is the prevailing class in those churches which receive their adolescent children into church membership after proper instruction and training. (*d*) There is a fourth class, largest of all, who must be specially labored with during this favorable period before they are awakened. Then they need the special impetus of revival influences and tragical emotional disturbances before their impressions are deep enough to lead to a radical change of life and to their entrance into the service of Christ. This is the largest class of all.

Temperament, previous training, and surroundings at the time have much to do with the type of religious awakening in different individuals; but it is a universal rule that the child who reaches adolescence in religious waywardness will never again be so open to religious impressions as he is during the continuance of this period.

We here seek to emphasize the "naturalness" of conversion during the adolescent period. It is just as natural for the wayward child to be converted during adolescence as it is for the trees to leaf and blossom during the springtime, or as it is for the pupa to rise at nature's appointed time from the chrysalis to the butterfly. The naturalness of conversion during this period is a mighty exhortation to Christian workers to make every possible exertion to let no child pass out of nature's own period unconverted. If we do let them pass they will never have as natural religious life as they might otherwise have had, if they have any at all.

On the other hand, we must not for a moment forget that the largest element in all conversion, however and wherever attained, is supernatural—divine. Those who fly from the naturalness of conversion during the adolescent period to the notion that it is a mere natural event show a very great lack in logical reasoning. The fact that conversion most frequently accompanies the natural physical and mental changes of adolescence is no proof whatever that it is itself a mere natural change. The fact is that the physical and mental conditions during adolescence are particularly favorable to religious awakening and impression, and that under proper human effort the adolescent is led to seek that change which can come alone through divine grace. Conversion during adolescence is, then, both natural and supernatural; more natural than it will ever be again, and fully as supernatural.

PART III

SOME WEIGHTY FACTORS IN THE FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS CHARACTER

CHAPTER I

TEMPERAMENT AND TRAINING AS FACTORS IN DETERMINING THE TYPE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

ALL souls are not alike. There is a general racial likeness, of course, but in capacities, temperament, and training they are very different. This fact appears plainly when we see two persons who have been reared under apparently similar conditions reacting in almost opposite ways to the same religious impressions. Two brothers similarly trained seek conversion; the one obtains the change with transports of emotion, while the other, seeking the same type of experience, fails, and is compelled to rest upon a much less emotional and tragical experience. We make no distinction between these two types of experience as to their comparative value, but simply call attention to them as samples of the almost endless variety of religious experience.

Religious experience is not, then, a simple and single thing, alike in all, but is as various as are the natural endowments, temperaments, and training of different individuals. Hence we must not expect that all children or all adults will experience the same type of religious life.

Temperament and training are inseparably blended as factors in actual life. Individuals differ, that is certain. How much of one's individual peculiarity comes from inherited temperamental qualities, and how much from the training we receive from the influence of parents, home, and church, is a difficult problem.

1. What is Temperament?—It is a very ancient notion that men start life with certain marked peculiarities which adhere more or less throughout life. It has also long been the custom to divide men into groups as they were possessed of one or the other of certain clusters of peculiarities. These distinguishing characteristics are not acquired, they are present at the beginning of life and are supposed to have their basis in the physical organism. Temperament is preeminently determined by the cast of the nervous system. Some nervous systems are particularly sensitive to stimuli, others are more serene. Some nervous systems react to impression with great rapidity, others more slowly. Other peculiarities are equally marked. Back of these peculiarities as

their foundation are three other systems of organs: (1) the vasomotor, (2) the digestive, and (3) the muscular.

Temperament is an unchangeable constitutional element. As such it must be taken into account in all wise training of individuals. We must approach children along the lines that are most suited to their temperaments. We must look for responses in harmony with temperamental peculiarities. Religious life and character will also tend to form themselves in harmony with these congenital peculiarities. Training and self-effort can do much, very much, toward changing human life and the very nature and character of the being itself, but all such change is limited by the unchangeable tendencies of an inherited physical constitution. Training and self-effort are by far the larger factors, else we would be victims of an inherited fatalism; but the persistency of temperament must be taken into account in determining wise methods of training, and also in judging of the results which may be wisely expected. It has been the perennial mistake in religious work to attempt to treat all souls alike, and to expect an identical type of experience in all. No allowance has been made for the temperament.

2. Classification of Temperaments. — There has been remarkable agreement as to the

number and character of the groups formed when individuals have been classified according to temperament. Four kinds of temperament have been universally recognized.

(1) *Sanguine Temperament.*—Sanguine persons usually have a fully developed circulatory system, red hair, blue eyes, fair skin, and animated face. They are lively, excitable, quickly aroused; feelings generally uppermost.

(2) *Choleric Temperament.*—Choleric persons are usually very muscular, have dark hair and eyes, sallow complexion, face impassioned. They are less quick than the sanguine and more enduring. They are self-confident, determined, and of strong will.

(3) *Phlegmatic Temperament.*—These persons usually have a large abdomen, round expressionless face, body generally disinclined to exertion. Mind heavy, often stupid, patient, and slow.

(4) *Melancholic Temperament.*—Melancholics usually have large heads, bright expressive eyes, slender figures, and quick emotions. They love poetry and music, are dreamy, and care little for practical affairs.

It is not expected that the above classification will give us a key to unlock all lives and give us perfect knowledge of the individual temperaments we meet with. It is a known fact that no two temperaments are exactly alike, and hence no exact classification is possible. Perhaps no living person is a perfect specimen of sanguine temperament, or of any other. No child or adult fits perfectly into any of these classes. All temperaments in actual life are mixed. Some are so slightly mixed as to be almost perfect specimens of a particular class; in such cases we will know almost exactly beforehand how the individual will think, feel, and act under given stimuli. Others are badly mixed, and yet some one type is so prevalent that it gives us an insight to the heart and life; we can partially forecast their reactions. Others are such jumbles that we never can classify them, or know what to expect of them. But even in such cases the study of temperament is of value to us. It at least leads to careful observation.

Here are some broad generalizations which are usually correct, though there are numerous exceptions: Adult females are usually of sanguine temperament. Adult males are usually choleric or phlegmatic. The boy, as a rule, is sanguine, the man choleric, and the aged man phlegmatic. The girl is usually sanguine, the woman sanguine or sentimental, and the aged woman choleric or phlegmatic.

After the above modifiers, when we speak of a person as of a particular temperament we will not be understood as saying that he is a perfect example of that class, but only that he belongs in that class rather than any other.

3. Influence of Temperament Over the Type of Religious Experience.—This influence has been largely tested in actual cases. The effort has been to determine how largely the emotional and abrupt type of religious experience belongs to persons of an emotional temperament. Professor George A. Coe thus investigated 77 cases. He took their own testimonies concerning their experiences and temperaments, sought the judgment of their friends, and made close personal observations. He divided his cases, first, into two general groups: (*a*) those who expected an abrupt and emotional experience of religion, and found it, and (*b*) those who expected such an experience, sought it, but found it not. Then he arranged the individuals according to the predominant mental trait: (*a*) those in whom intellect was predominant, and (*b*) those in whom emotion or sensibility was predominant. He then arranged them according to the four groups of temperament as above outlined.

Seventeen of the 77 cases obtained the abrupt emotional religious experience. It was found that 12 of these were persons in whom the emotions were clearly predominant, and in two intellect held sway. Of the 12 who sought but failed to attain the abrupt emotional experience, intellect clearly predominated in 9, emotion in 2. The inference is clear that in most cases the emotional religious experience is obtained by persons of emotional temperament, while those of intellectual temperament do not obtain that type of experience.

Of the 17 who obtained the abrupt emotional change 8 were of sanguine temperament, 6 of the melancholic, 1 of the choleric, and 2 of the phlegmatic. Of the 12 who sought and failed to attain the abrupt emotional experience 7 were of the choleric temperament, 3 of the melancholic, 2 of the sanguine, and none of the phlegmatic. Here we find the great majority of those who obtained the emotional experience—14 out of 17—in the sanguine and melancholic classes. In these temperaments emotion is prevalent. Hence the conclusion that there is a close relation between natural temperament and the type of religious experience, life, and character.

Fifteen of the 17 persons who obtained the emotional type of experience were found to be subject to mental and motor automatisms, such as dreams, visions, communication with deceased friends, uncontrollable laughter, etc. Here, too, there seems to be a temperamental basis for the type of religious experience actually obtained.

By testing the various persons with hypnotism it was found that 13 out of the 17 who obtained the emotional experience were good hypnotic subjects. Of those who failed to attain such experience only one was found to be a good hypnotic subject. The psychologists call the mental characteristic which makes one a good hypnotic subject "suggestibility." Suggestibility is a matter of constitutional temperament. So, here again, there seems to be a close connection between temperament and the type of religious experience which is possible and natural to individuals.

4. Some Practical Conclusions.—(1) Let us not ascribe the difference in types of religious experience to the inscrutable ways in which God bestows his grace, but rather to the temperamental differences in individuals.

(2) Let us be wise enough not to attempt to foist upon children a type of religious experience which is adapted only to adults. In a previous chapter we have studied the large differences between the child mind and the adult mind. We have seen in this chapter that children are, as a rule, of one particular sort of temperament: the sanguine. It scarcely needs statement that some types of religious experience natural to

adults will be stilted to children, and unnatural as well.

One of the emphatic messages of this book is that we must adapt the methods of our religious work among children to the nature and capacities of the child at the time. We have done much harm by starting with the mistaken idea that religion consists of just a definite lot of theological notions, resulting inevitably in all cases in another specific lot of experience of a uniform type, and then concluding further that he only who has the whole bundle, theological and experimental, is a Christian. We have brought this adult bundle to the child in all stages of his growth and insisted that he accept it jot and tittle. The result in some cases has been a protested acceptance and a feeling of unnaturalness in the Christian life that followed. In others the result has been flat refusal to have anything to do with it. In others still it has led to a life of deception; that is, they professed to have the prescribed bundle when they had not.

(3) We must bring to the child religious methods adapted to his temperament and needs. Dr. T. B. Neely has well said, "In seeking the conversion of children we should not make the mistake of some in applying the same methods that might be used in the case of old and callous

criminals. We should not expect them to be squeezed through the same mechanical mold as hardened sinners, and we should not expect the same degree of mental reaction and emotional manifestation."[1]

(4) We must get over the folly of thinking one child in a higher state of grace than another because he has a different type of religious experience. It is not always the child who has the deepest emotional experience in religious things who is really the most religious. Maybe in the end we will determine that the child who has little emotion, but who is blessed with a strong will, controlling thought, word, and deed, is the more Christlike.

(5) Let us beware of over-emphasizing any one type of religious experience. We fear there is some ground for Professor Coe's charge that the Church has "unduly honored feeling to the relative neglect of thought, and especially of action." We have accepted the thoughtful, serene, ethical, type of experience when the more emotional was not attainable, but we have done so under protest. We have looked upon the emotional type as the ideal religious experience, and sometimes as the only religious experience. The plea here is that the different types of religious

[1] *Sunday School Journal*, January, 1901, p. 4.

experience, inasmuch as they grow out of temperamental conditions, be put on the same basis, as far as genuineness, worth, and naturalness are concerned.

The fact is that the active type of religious life is more natural to the child in his early stages than either the strictly intellectual or the highly emotional. The power of Roman Catholicism over her children lies largely in the movement and picturesqueness which she has wrought into her forms of worship. There is something to do and much to see. The child is thus suited, his temperamental peculiarity is met. Protestants may adapt their worship even better to the children if they set about it intelligently and earnestly. Both types of religious experience have their place, the intellectual and emotional, but they are not all-inclusive. There is an indefinite number of shadings from each. We shall need diligent study in order to so clearly perceive the child's actual temperamental peculiarities that we can adapt matter, manner, and method to the particular needs of the particular child at the particular time.

CHAPTER II

HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT AS FACTORS IN THE CHILD'S RELIGIOUS LIFE

About the middle of the last century there arose a distinctly scientific age. It began with a change in the methods of investigation. Instead of sitting in the study and reasoning how things ought to be it went out into the world of actual things and, after due observation, formulated its theories. This method has gradually found its way into the study of nature, into the study of the Bible, into the study of the nature of children, and into the study of all the facts of religious experience and life.

This scientific age has made us very familiar with some words which were little known before it arose. Among these are the words which head this chapter—heredity and environment. These terms were applied at first only to the differentiation of species, but have now forced themselves into the language of those who write or speak of man, whether in his physical, social, intellectual, or religious aspects.

1. What is Heredity?—Weismann defines it

as "that property of an organism by which its peculiar nature is transmitted to its descendants."[1] Ribot says, "Heredity is that biological law by which all beings endowed with life tend to repeat themselves in their descendants."[2] Dr. A. H. Bradford says, "Heredity is the law through which the individual receives from his parents by birth his chief vital forces and tendencies, his physical and spiritual capital."[3]

The law of heredity is not without its apparent exceptions when we apply it to actual cases, yet the general prevalence of this law is not doubted by careful students of human life any more than by students of biology. This law has been emphasized and brought into prominence by modern science, but its potency has been recognized as long as history has been written.

The ultra-scientific spirit of some people in our age has overworked the law of heredity. They have made it such a determinative force that no place has been left for free will in determining life and character. The outcome of this exaggeration is a rank scientific fatalism. This false result has made the very word an offense to the theologian. Such an extreme view must be avoided, while we fully recognize the fact as it is.

[1] *Essays on Heredity*, p. 71. [2] *Heredity*, p. 1.
[3] *Heredity and Christian Problems*, p. 2.

The plain fact observed everywhere in actual life is that it is with difficulty that the child crosses the lines laid down for him by his ancestry and rids himself of hereditary tendencies. Persistent training and continued self-effort can cross these lines, but it requires enough force to show us beyond a doubt that these hereditary tendencies exist.

What traits are hereditary? (*a*) All that distinguish species as such are plainly hereditary. Birds always give birth to birds, fishes to fishes, and human beings to human beings. (*b*) Race peculiarities are invariably transmitted. A Shetland pony never gave birth to a dray horse, neither do pure-blooded white human beings ever have negro children. These racial lines are sacredly preserved. (*c*) Family characteristics are also hereditary. The aquiline nose of the Bourbon family, the taste for natural history which adhered to the Darwin family, and the genius for music which was characteristic of the Bachs for generations are familiar examples. (*d*) Individual characteristics are also hereditary. Here the marks of heredity are not quite as plain, yet it is quite generally accepted that children inherit the peculiarities of their parents. Life insurance companies evidently believe this, for they refuse to insure those whose parents died of pulmonary consumption. An intelligent man said, "Next to the grace of God in my own heart I prize my godly ancestry. What I inherited from their struggles and victories has made my own life-work easier." So might we all say, if blest with the grace of God and godly ancestors.

All well-written biographies recognize the heredity of individual characteristics. They begin by introducing us to the parents and often to the grandparents of the one whose life they portray. They show us how the physical, mental, and religious traits are reproduced in the child. Thus tacitly do we everywhere assume the heredity of individual characteristics.

2. The Explanation of Apparent Exceptions.—There is a general principle that explains most of the apparent exceptions to the law of heredity. It is what the scientist calls "atavism," or "reversional heredity." It is the reproduction in descendants of traits not present in the parents, but evidently present in the grandparents, or even more remote ancestors. The writer bears no striking resemblance to father or mother in some of his most pronounced personal traits; but in physical and mental features, temperament, and disposition is like an uncle on his father's side. This is a case of atavism. This principle makes heredity a difficult problem to unravel when we apply it to actual cases, but it also makes possible

the strict persistence of the law in spite of so many cases where it does not seem to prevail. The apparent exception is only a case so complex that we cannot trace the lines of descent.

Then, again, hereditary traits are so early modified in human beings by the surroundings and the training that the lines of descent may be much obscured and modified, and so become difficult to trace.

The law of heredity is specially hard to trace in human beings because of the complexity of their lives. In the simplest organized life, such as the protozoa, the child perfectly resembles the parent, for all the specimens in generations are exactly alike. The parents simply cut themselves in two and there are two lives instead of one, and exactly alike. Then in these lower forms of life the environment is always the same. But when we come to human beings the complexity of the life and the environment becomes so great that the line of heredity is obscure, although it is impossible to doubt that it persists.

The practical good to be obtained by a study of heredity is a better understanding of the natural impulses, disposition, and temperament of the child resulting from a knowledge of his ancestry and the hereditary lines which converge upon him. The keen student of child life is thus frequently able to know beforehand what to expect, morally and religiously, in a particular child. We may thus use wise methods to supplant wrong heredities and to foster the good.

3. What is Environment?—It is all that group of influences, conditions, and events which modify the nature of an individual or change the tendency of his life. In this group, as it touches human life, are soil, climate, food, state of society, character of parents, home, school, and church. A child starts in life with certain natural characteristics, but these do not go on into mature life spontaneously and inevitably. The process is influenced from without. The surroundings are assimilated, and they thus mold the feelings, thoughts, ideals, character; the life.

One who is a consumptive in the Eastern States may become strong and well in Colorado or Arizona; in other words, heredity may be overcome by environment. So, too, the child of vicious parents, if brought into a religious atmosphere, may become pure, noble, and religious. On the other hand, a well man from the West may acquire consumption in the Eastern States and transmit it to his children; or in other words, a bad environment may overcome a good heredity. So potent is environment that a child of good and religious parentage, if placed in evil surroundings, will likely himself become evil and irreligious. In the practical work of the religious training of children we have too largely overlooked the tremendous influence of the environment. We have failed to reach the child by an intelligent use of that great door of unconscious but effectual influence of proper surroundings.

4. How Environment Operates.—Two general processes have been observed. *First, the law of imitation.* Professor J. M. Baldwin has elaborated this factor to an almost exaggerated degree. It is plainly, however, a very potent factor. A mocking bird imitates a sparrow, a beaver imitates an architect, a child imitates his nurse, a man imitates his pastor. In these several cases of imitation we have a varying amount of consciousness and intelligence in the act. The order observed in naming these cases of imitation represents the ascending scale of intelligence and will present. The child in his ascending life passes through each stage. At first his imitation is purely reflex, but it finally reaches the ideal imitation accomplished only by intelligent purpose, forethought, and will. Thus constantly through life, consciously and unconsciously, we are imbibing character from our environment by imitation.

Second, the influence of suggestion. Hypnotism as developed in recent years has called our attention to the power of suggestion. Hypnotic suggestion is only an exaggerated form of the influence which we normally exert over one another. Hypnotism is only exaggerated suggestion. Some parents, teachers, and preachers have such a power of riveting the attention of all who come in contact with them that it amounts to a mild hypnotism. Suggestion is the form of influence exerted over us by our environment so far as it is made up of other personalities. Thus in earliest infancy, when we cannot reason about things or receive instruction from words, we are unconsciously molded by the very looks and feelings of other personalities about us. This influence takes a wider range still when we remember that not only living personalities, but the very face of nature and material things of every sort, so far as they impinge upon us through the five senses, are leaving an abiding impression.

5. Relation of Heredity and Environment.—We have now considered these factors separately; it remains to study their relation to each other and their relative importance in the building of religious character.

Heredity is in absolute control at the beginning of life, but almost immediately environment begins its modifying influence. For a considerable time the environment of the child is without intelligent choice on his own part. The parents and others are responsible during this period for the character of the influences which touch and modify the growing life and character. This delegated responsibility continues in decreasing amount up to the time of full moral responsibility, at ten or twelve years of age. In this long childhood human kind are distinguished from all branches of the animal world. Such scientific writers as John Fiske, William James, and J. M. Baldwin have called attention to the long infancy period of human beings as compared with that of animals. This long period of dependency marks the child as fitted for a high destiny the preparation for which cannot be quickly made. The sphere of environment also is enlarged by this preparation, and finally it puts tremendous importance upon the training and nurturing afforded by the parents during this long dependent period.

It is the consensus of opinion among modern students that environment is stronger than heredity. If not, we are in a fatalistic treadmill. Our ancestors have made it, and bound us fast. The common sense of the race demands that a proper environment shall overcome the most pernicious heredity. Bishop D. A. Goodsell says, "Training in good families and in benevolent institutions shows that tendency can be restrained by instruction and bad blood become good blood. The Church has housed millions who 'by restraining and renewing grace' have led a new and holy life. Such have found in the religious strength a stronger than hereditary power."[1]

6. Relation of Heredity and Environment to Free Will.—Heredity and environment have both been scarecrows in the theological field. They have given alarm because they have been presented by the average scientist as such fatalistic elements as to leave no place for free will. Heredity has been pictured as so strong and persistent, and environment as so largely beyond our choice or control and so determinative of life and character, that free will became a figment and personal responsibility a dream.

Nevertheless, whatever our science may say or the exigency of our philosophy may demand, no human being can or will believe other than that he is free. Dr. Samuel Johnson did but voice the feeling of the race when, in the midst of the controversy over free will, he said, "I know I am free, and there is the end of it." All of our theories must bend to this race consciousness. Happily, the latest and best scientists so present the laws of heredity and environment as not to interfere with

[1] *Methodist Review*, January–February, 1889, p. 47.

the freedom of the will and the fact of personal responsibility for life and character.

As a matter of course, during the first four or five years of life the child is in a fatalism so far as his personal choice is concerned. This fatalism only grows gradually less until, at ten or twelve, full moral choice and full personal responsibility take their rise. During all this time a large part of the responsibility rests with the parents or other adults.

Upon the arrival of the fully responsible period a great change takes place. The character now depends less on such natural factors as heredity and environment than on free choice and voluntary effort. Heredity meets with a new force which can snub it and command it, or submit to it and encourage it. This is sovereign will. How largely our freewill choices are influenced by hereditary tendencies and the previous training or environment no one can exactly state. It is doubtless true that heredity is present as a tendency, and that the environment also exerts an influence, but it is a matter of common consciousness and experience that the will is so sovereign that it can go against all tendencies, and all influences, and direct the life along the line of its own choices. However, as a rule, the will does not thus rise above and go against the natural bias given by heredity and environment. The will, when it sets about changing an evil heredity, finds the choosing of a good environment a large factor in the process. Even the grace of God operates, at least partially, through this natural channel. Whatever that grace may do in a direct contact with the soul of man, it is certain that it accomplishes much toward overcoming a bad heredity when it leads the individual to put himself and keep himself in a proper environment. What a power this is, for instance, where one seeks to overcome an inherited taste for intoxicants. The grace of God must never be forgotten as a factor in this problem. Bishop Goodsell says, "When I can say 'My Lord and my God' I can defeat all bad ancestries."[1]

[1] *Methodist Review*, January-February, 1889 p. 50.

CHAPTER III

FREE WILL AND HABIT IN RELATION TO RELIGIOUS CHARACTER

THE necessity of a study of religious character must be apparent. It will be readily granted that, if we have only hazy notions as to what religious character is, we will be but poorly prepared to plan and carry forward a course of training which will result in such character. Before studying religious character it will be necessary for us to have some clear conception of character in general, and of moral character in particular.

1. WHAT IS CHARACTER.—In a broad sense character is synonymous with nature. We often use these words interchangeably, but a more exact use of the word character applies it to the joint product of our natural tendencies and capacities as they are modified by our free choice and the persistent habits of our lives. In the beginning nature and character are one; it is, really, all nature. Nature persists in greater or less degree all through life, but is subject to considerable modification. A large part of character is the abiding element left in us by our freely chosen activities.

It is the soil out of which our future activities tend to spring.

It is just because character results from our freewill activities that we are responsible for our characters. Character thus becomes a matter of choice, and so a matter of personal responsibility.

Salvation in its final essence is a change of character. It is less an exemption from the penalty of sin than it is the supplanting of a disposition or bias toward evil and irreligiousness by a permanent disposition or bias toward the good and the religious. This change is wrought by the Holy Ghost operating through the free will of the individual, and that in turn utilizing the natural elements and sources of influence around it. No regeneration or sanctification ever supersedes the part assigned the human will in the change of character.

Character in the freewill sense, as here used, is impossible to the child before four or five years of age, and not fully possible before ten or twelve. Yet in a limited sense it may be applied to the nature of the child as it is modified through the intelligent freewill effort of the parents. The parents thus furnish by proxy the element of free will. So we will not be misunderstood when we speak of the character of children.

2. What is Moral Character?—The most essential element of moral character is voluntary choice. That which we do from mere impulse or instinct does not form moral character until such impulse or instinct is freely chosen and adopted as our own.

Rational intelligence is also a prerequisite to moral character. Without a knowledge of moral law and obligation one cannot do greater moral wrong than the bird does in eating your cherries.

The relation of the emotions to moral character is twofold. The feelings accompany all thinking and willing, and hence they precede moral character and are among the factors which lead to it. The emotions are also aroused by our actions, and hence naturally result from moral character. Thus we see that the emotions are concomitants of moral character, and results of moral character, but are not an essential part of moral character itself.

3. What is Religious Character?—It is a permanent disposition to freely love, trust, and serve God. The word permanent is here used to denote that character is not evanescent, but abiding. Religious character includes the elements of moral character outlined above, and passes beyond them in judging of life, not only in relation to abstract ideals of right, but in relation to a per-

sonal God, who is to be loved, worshiped, and served. The free, persistent, habitual choice of God and his service constitutes what is here meant by religious character. No single religious act, or even series of acts, is religious character, but the volitional habit or permanent disposition which grows out of such acts and leads to their continuance is religious character.

The instinctive religiousness of the child is religious character only in a modified sense. It is strictly the child's religious nature. When that nature has been adopted by intelligent free will it passes into religious character in the sense above defined. In a modified sense, however, it is proper to speak of the child's religious character, for, as above seen, the parents furnish by proxy the free-will element, as they control the training and environment which molds the child's life and character.

Although religious character in its full sense is impossible in infancy let no one think for a moment that religious training is valueless during those early years. On the contrary, it so influences and molds the child's natural reactions and tendencies, depressing the evil and cultivating the good, that the child reaches the time of free moral choice and formation of religious character free from the bias to evil, if not positively biased toward the good. The natural result of this is the hearty choice of religious things, which in turn results in religious habits and character. Early religious training affords parents an opportunity which they never have again in life: that of molding and influencing the life and character, almost infallibly, as they desire.

4. Proper Estimate of the Will in Formation of Religious Character. (1) *Not Unlimited.*—Heredity counts for something, and counts persistently. Environment counts for something, and counts persistently. There is a determination of self which no self-determination can overcome. There is a limit to the change which can be made to nature. This impassable rock is embedded in a constitutional organism. Will, determination, effort, can do much—more than we usually think—but there is a limit somewhere. The will finds this limit. The will is the great strong determining factor in character building, but heredity and environment count for something, and in many cases are exceedingly hard to overcome. What a strong will is that in the child of the inebriate who, inheriting the seeds of drunkenness and raised in the midst of it, rises above both heredity and environment and lives soberly and righteously. This is an extreme case, but it presents plainly the relation of the will to

heredity and environment as it appears in the average case.

(2) *The Will is a Tremendous Factor.*—It is often undervalued. The scientist of materialistic tendencies puts heredity in such a prominent place in the forces that build character that no place is left for free self-determination. Then another class of teachers puts environment in an equally fatal aspect. Then the current religious teaching overemphasizes passive religious states to the neglect of the positive, active, willful states. The seeker is asked "How do you feel?" and is thus led to look upon certain states of feeling as the very life and soul of religious experience and life. When he "feels good" he is surely good, but when he feels bad he is sure he has lost his religion, and I think he has lost all he ever had. No wonder that a religious character built on such a foundation is fickle and superficial. On the other hand, real religious experience and character, while they give emotion its proper place, and a good big place, too, build most upon the voluntary states. It is by no means clear that every wave of joyful emotion is a baptism of the Holy Ghost. If there is a whole-hearted consecration of self to Christ there will be found accompanying this act a feeling of peace and gladness which may, without much fear of mistake, be recognized as the influ-

ence of the Holy Ghost. Such consecration is held to continuance by the resolute will, and becomes habitual; a second nature; a firm, abiding religious character.

5. Habit as the Basis of Character.—Habit is closely related to character. Volitional acts pass into character through the medium of habit. This is true of our physical, intellectual, moral, and religious habits and characters. Three things concerning the relation of habit to character are of importance to those who are interested in religious training.

(1) *The Good is Habitual as Well as the Bad.*—Professor William James has said truly, "Our virtues are habits, as well as our vices." Here we have failed to lay proper emphasis. We have been so busy establishing the supernatural elements of religious character that we have paid little heed to what may be termed the natural fibers which go to make it up. We have looked upon religious character as the result either of a natural endowment or of some abrupt supernatural change. Both of these are of great value, but, after all, a large part of our abiding trustworthy character is the crystallization of our everyday voluntary acts by the power of habit. Here is a principle of surpassing value in religious training. We can begin only by calling forth separate religious

responses or reactions. By doing this persistently we make sure that the separate responses shall become fixed habits, and these in turn become abiding character.

(2) *Habit has a Physical Basis.*—What we term our native tendencies or impulses might properly be called inherited habits. The habits of our ancestors have descended to us through an inherited organism. Their nervous systems and the substance of their brains grew to the way in which they were constantly used. Their lives found expression in brain paths and casts of nervous organization. These are transmitted to the infant by heredity and become his native tendencies, impulses, and instincts.

A new habit can only be formed by such persistent doing of anything as will make a new brain path, or give a new cast to the nervous organization. Thus character, even religious character, rests back upon habit, and habit in turn upon the physical organism.

(3) *Habits are Very Rapidly Formed in Youth.*—Recent psychology has called attention to the extreme plasticity of nervous matter early in life. It has shown clearly that the longer we delay the forming of a desired habit the more difficult it will become, until finally the task is practically impossible. Most of our life habits are

fixed at twenty years of age. Professor Romanes puts this truth in verse:

> "No change in childhood's early day,
> No storm that raged, no thought that ran,
> But leaves a track upon the clay
> Which slowly hardens into man."

From earliest infancy every thought, word, and deed is recorded in the corresponding changes which take place in the physical organism. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every new debauch by saying, "I won't count this time." Whether he counts it, or a kind Heaven counts it, there is a counting going on. In the fibers of his brain and among the cells of his nerves the most exact record is being kept, and it will appear to defeat him in the presence of the next temptation. A kind Providence sees to it that our good deeds are likewise exactly and indelibly recorded and avail for our help in future life and character.

How many of our life habits are established by three years of age? Some say a majority. Certainly very many. What does this fact suggest as to religious training? Religion is an instinct, but, like other instincts, it only awakens in the presence of the proper stimuli. It is ours to furnish the proper example and surroundings to awaken the native impulse and develop it in the right direction. The first result will be a line of religious responses, the next the fixing of habits of reverence and feeling for the divine, and finally religious character.

6. The Natural and the Supernatural in Religious Character.—We are drifting from the Latin toward the Greek notion of God. The Roman found God only in the great tragic events of life—the other events were simply natural. The Greek saw God in everything. For him no star shone, no leaf trembled, no ocean roared, or flower bloomed, except God was in it. The modern doctrine of the divine immanence is only the ripe fruit of the old Greek idea of God. We are ceasing to look for God only in the gaps of nature or in its tragic events, and rather delight to think that he is present in all the ordinary everyday movements of nature and life about us.

A like change is taking place in our notion of the divine operations in the spiritual and religious realm. We have looked for God only in the gaps of religious experience and in tragic events, rather than in its everyday experiences. Conversion, especially in its abrupt and emotional type, has been looked upon as surely supernatural, and such it really is. But it is not the only supernatural religious event, or the only way in which God changes the religious nature. We are coming to believe that God is just as surely present in the everyday experiences which are originated and controlled by a will that is bent on serving God and sets about the work of building up religious habits and forming religious character. We thus enlarge our view of the supernatural. We do not undertake to lay the line which divides off the result of human effort from that which is produced by divine energy, but rest assured that both factors are present and operative. They are blended rather than separated.

The notion that religious character is the result of divine operation alone is both untrue and misleading. Those who indulge such thoughts are tempted to neglect the daily care, will, and effort necessary to reach the desired end. All this in full view of the fact that we can do nothing that is good without divine aid. Neither does God break over our wills and make us good without our active cooperation. He works along the line of our natural powers.

Religious character, in its strict sense, is not created in us at regeneration, or at any other sudden religious change. In regeneration there come new thoughts, desires, affections, settings of the will; these in turn result in new acts; and these in new habits; and these in abiding character. Regeneration begins the process, but it is not completed without the elements of time, will, and effort.

This view of religious character lays bare the great opportunity which is afforded parents during childhood. It lays great honor upon some elements of life which have been considered commonplace, such as the forming of habits. It magnifies the royalty of human will, and at the same time gives large place to the Deity in establishing religious character. It opens up a plan of operation by which, through divine grace, an abiding religious character may be established for life.

PART IV

METHODS OF RELIGIOUS TRAINING

In the foregoing study we have met with many principles of method. Again and again we have come squarely up to practical conclusions concerning methods of training which demanded immediate statement. This was the natural result of a continued effort to make every page of this book helpful to the practical work of religious training. It remains now to gather into more methodical form some of the principles of method already stated and add such as did not force themselves upon us in previous chapters.

It is only possible, and indeed only profitable, to lay down the general principles of method. The details of application are of almost infinite variety, and to be effective must be the outgrowth of the worker's own tact and ingenuity. They cannot be bought ready-made. Happily, any intelligent parent, teacher, or other person interested in the training of children, who will make a thorough study of the religious nature of childhood and the general principles of method will without difficulty devise the best methods of application in the particular case. However in the treatment of method here given more or less of detail will be set forth. Such details are given, not as suited to all cases, but as applicable to some and as suggestive in others.

CHAPTER I

THE CHILD IS A GERM TO BE DEVELOPED AND NOT A RECEPTACLE FOR INFORMATION

MUCH of our failure has resulted from the false assumption that religion is something to be acquired outwardly. We have overlooked the fact that it is a native instinct, to be developed. The attitude of the past in religious teaching has been too largely this: "All children need certain information on religious topics and the quicker we cram it into them the better." We have made the teaching of certain good and wholesome truths the sum and substance of our efforts at religious training. Then in a majority of cases the children, full of great doctrines and Bible history, have gone out of home and church to live godless lives, and we have settled back in our easy-chairs to divide our time between debating why they are not saved and questioning the truth of the promise, "Train up a child in the way he should go," etc. The fact is, we have had no claim on the promise, for we have been teaching, and not training.

Teaching is one part of training, and only a part. It is a much smaller part than is often imagined. It is a most helpful way of influencing character after the child mind has reached the stage of development where truth becomes a factor in molding thought, action, life. But we have been playing almost exclusively on this information string, and the music has become distasteful. We must broaden our sphere and try to touch the young life all over. In order to this we must not only conceive of the child as a mind to be stored with wholesome truth, but as a body to be reckoned with, an emotional nature to be touched, a social element to be provided for, a religious impulse to be developed, and a religious character to be trained. Horace Bushnell insisted that the child takes in at least as much from silent assumptions of its surroundings as from positive instruction.

After the child has reached the ability to grasp truth, and to shape the life in accordance therewith, the possession of great truths is a mighty factor. But we have already seen that in waiting for this period to arrive we neglect the instinctive, formative—and therefore most important—period of life. During this early period the child receives his training largely from the atmosphere in which he lives. This atmosphere is created primarily by parental example, forethought, and spirit. During this plastic period the parents are molding the unfolding germ of child life by every thought, look, word, and deed. They may also tremendously influence the young life by seeing that it is surrounded on the street, at school, in the home, and at church, with a good wholesome companionship. To fill the children with great and holy truths, and then by neglect surround them with a daily atmosphere that is religiously sterile or baneful, is of the same piece with eating wholesome food and then putting ourselves in an atmosphere that is heavy with germs of disease and death. We are learning that in home, school, and church a very important part of our work is to create conditions—regulate atmospheres—which carry on a process of training in the right direction unconsciously to the child. The teaching of great truths, and the commanding of conduct by dint of authority, have a large place in the training of human souls, but the influencing of thought, life, and character by the creation of proper conditions and surroundings has been too largely overlooked. This has resulted from looking upon the child soul as a receptacle to be filled, rather than as a germ to be developed. Filling does not depend upon environment, but growth does.

Bishop J. H. Vincent says: "We prolong life and grow by the food we eat at stated times and in formal and conventional ways. But it is not only by the processes of table life that we live and grow. There are besides our meals, the air we breathe every moment, sunlight, sleep, clothing, and the artificial heating of the atmosphere which we keep up. After the same manner are we educated, not by specific acts of appointed teachers, but by every hour we live, by every breath we draw, by every object we see, by every word we hear, and by the intellectual, moral, social, yea, even the physical atmosphere which surrounds us. It is a serious problem in the true pedagogy: How shall we select, apply, and regulate the educating conditions? and it is a question for the people rather than for the pedagogues to answer."[1] These words lay emphasis upon those elements in character building which are usually overlooked, and which are at the same time so very important. We have bunched them and called them training, in distinction from teaching. We insist that the beginning of good method must be laid in studying the conditions under which the soul grows and develops religiously.

The practical application of this first principle of method calls for less dependence upon religious information imparted to the child and more upon the unfolding of the soul through the social, moral, and religious surroundings and atmos-

[1] *A Study in Pedagogy*, p. 39.

phere. The whole Bible and the whole Catechism thoroughly mastered avail nothing if they are accompanied with flippant, irreverent feelings, thoughts, words, and actions, growing out of the educative conditions. The child soul must and can be made to feel the impress of divine things. This is a prerequisite to any religious training. The reverent, natural, easy, devout prayer and song of the church or home, in which the children take a heartfelt part, must supplement and make effective the teaching process. Under such treatment the religious element of the unfolding germ of child life grows with the other elements of the life to strength and maturity. Without it the religious nature is dwarfed, even though the mind is filled with religious truths. Children must be brought under the influence of solemn, joyful songs of praise, devout prayer, heartfelt worship, and the preaching of the word, and be led to take a natural fervent part in all during their early years. Voltaire said the foundations of his infidelity were laid before he was five years old. May we not lay the foundations of earnest devotion and fervent worship during the same years? Parental authority at home, and shrewd device to gain attention at church, may at first be necessary. But soon the sense of duty will give place to the feeling of delight.

CHAPTER II

TRAINING MUST BE ADAPTED TO THE STAGE OF GROWTH

One of the well-attested principles of mental science is that there are stages of mental growth keeping pace with the stages of bodily growth. So high an authority as the apostle Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."[1] Even that great mind had its child period.

Another principle equally well recognized both by common sense and science is that each stage demands special conditions to arouse its peculiar activities and lead to the best growth and development of the child soul during its continuance. The body requires food adapted to its stage of growth, and is subject to dwarfing and even death from unsuitable food. So the soul demands the right food at the right time. The earliest stages of life are the most difficult to provide for, and hence are most frequently neglected or improperly treated. As a result the proper self-activities fail,

[1] 1 Cor. xiii, 11.

the brain cells and nerve centers do not grow as they should, and the resulting damage to the religious nature is lifelong.

In our previous study of the stages or periods of growth we found that individuals differ so widely in the rate of their development that only the broadest generalizations could be absolutely depended upon. We also found that the order of the periods is far more definite than the particular times at which certain functions begin. I believe that the outline of religious periods given in a previous chapter is according to nature, and it will be followed here.

1. WHAT SHALL WE DO DURING THE INSTINCTIVE OR SPONTANEOUS PERIOD?—This is the most difficult of all the periods to practically provide for. The parent who can make wise plans for the religious help of the child during his first three or four years will probably have little difficulty thereafter. During this period the native tendencies and impulses are predominant. Self-consciousness has not arisen, and intelligence is present only in a very limited sense, but great lifelong impressions are being made. During this period the wise parent makes careful study of the child's inherited impulses, tendencies, and temperament. At this time there is no dissimulation or restraint of natural impulse. The child acts out

his own real self. The parent may now see and begin to check the wrong impulses, by removing the stimuli which call them forth, and also to cultivate the good by an opposite course of procedure. No one can recollect in after life the religious impressions made during this period, but there is abundant evidence that during this dawn period the child is tremendously influenced by his religious surroundings. The infant soul is more responsive to the influences brought to it through the senses than the most delicate phonographic plate is to the touch of the needle which writes upon it.

The inventor of the phonograph found his greatest difficulty in properly tempering the material of the revolving cylinder which catches and reproduces the impressions made by the sounds received. When it was a little too soft the needle, impelled by the sound waves, made the impressions easily, but they soon faded away and could not be reproduced. When it was a little too hard the needle failed to make an impression, and there was nothing to reproduce. Finally it was just right. It had sufficient receiving and proper reproducing power. It is now well known that the substance of the human brain passes through a gradually hardening process from birth to the end of life. The period of highest memory falls at about eleven years of age. The receptive powers are then strong, and the retentive also. Previous to that period the mind is easily impressed, but the impression fades away rapidly. After that period impressions are increasingly difficult to produce, and increasingly shallow and short lived, because not sufficiently deep. From this let us learn that, so far from being proof against impression, the earliest years of child life are the most impressionable of all. But let us also remember that religious impressions, like all others, must be oft repeated in order to produce a lasting result in character. It is a very great mistake to wait until the period of greatest memory before we begin religious training. The impressions made during these earliest years may be fleeting but they are easily made, and if persisted in will develop the religious instinct, while the opposite course permits it to languish and perhaps die before the intelligent period is fully reached. The effort to revive the religious instinct of a person whose early life has been absolutely free from religious impression would be as hopeless as the effort to revive a tree on the spot from which its last root has been removed. The Christian worker finds many proofs of this in real life.

The efforts at religious training during this first period must appeal primarily to the senses. The old notion that children have innate ideas well enough developed to grasp the heart of things by intuition is now thoroughly banished from every realm except the religious, and here it is going. It is seen that the senses develop first and the higher intuitions afterward. The latter are the result of sense-perception acting upon native race instincts. The medium of reception in this first period is limited to the senses. Religion is one of the higher intuitions—the very highest. It is the outgrowth of a natural instinct which responds first, in its own way, to the impressions of sense, and having grown under this stimulus it finally responds to the more intellectual influences of life. Hence our first appeal must be to the senses.

Little children have a spontaneous interest in nature. This spontaneous interest is a finger post pointing the way to successful religious training. We must make our appeal to these native impulses and interests in the beginning. We train by enlarging, purifying, ennobling, and even by substituting for these native impulses. The child is rich in these inherited tendencies. He needs the same general sort of surroundings and influences to bear upon him in this sense period as bore upon the race when it was passing through this period in its history. Such stimuli awaken the native responses, and do not knock at a door where the occupant of the house has not arrived. Our early ancestors had no books, no reasoned theologies, but God spoke to them chiefly through the face of nature. In their simplicity they fell at nature's feet and worshiped. Sun, moon, and star, tree, all were objects of their devotion. Now any plant will grow best when it is in the same conditions that produced the species. The laws of plant growth and infant growth seem very similar.

Hence we naturally conclude that the religious instinct during this first period responds quickly to the touch of nature. What child has not had in his earliest years strange impressions of the Creator when brought for the first time into contact with some grand view? The mountain, the sea, the expanse of stars, have they not impressed your child spirit with the feeling of awe and the spirit of worship? What adult cannot remember some such experience on the border of intelligent life? During all of this first period, and a large part of the next, no other effort is so effective in religious training as that which brings the child soul into contact with nature. The response at first will not greatly manifest itself, perhaps not at all; but eventually it will be made, unless the child is false to his deepest instinct. A time spent in the woods, or by the ocean shore, or a good long look at the starry heavens may make indelible religious impressions on the child heart. I greatly pity a child who at six years of age can stand at the seashore and not hear the voice of God in the roar of the waves; who can look at the moon and the starry heavens without seeing the face of the Deity therein; who can view a beautiful landscape and not be hushed into reverence with a sense of the presence of "nature's God." There is a deficiency in such a child's training. He has passed through his nature period without feeling her impress. In keeping wth this Dr. G. Stanley Hall has said, "The first need of childhood to-day is ample, long, all-sided exposure to all the nature influences. That is the basis of religion. It is the basis without which religion will never be complete, or what it might otherwise have been."[1]

Another practical path lies open to us during this period: that of impressing the child by the religious exercises observed in his presence and in which he takes appropriate part as soon as he is able. Before the years of intelligent understanding the child will be greatly impressed by the religious exercises of his elders. His native religious impulse will be touched by the bending forms of the parents as they kneel around the family altar.

[1] Chautauqua Lecture on "Nature Study," 1897.

The bowed head, the folded hands, the reverent tone of voice will awaken religious impulses in the child and finally lay the basis for religious habit and character. Toward the close of the first period the child may be taught some simple form of prayer and trained in the attitude and spirit of prayer and of general worship. He will not understand all the theological questions involved, but who does? Never rest satisfied until the child has an evident sense of God, a real reverence. At two or three the child can learn the little prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," but let no mother think that she has really accomplished the task when she has taught the form of words. The heartless, flippant repetition of those tender words is little, if any, better than nothing. A simple reminder and explanation that the child is about to talk to God will make prayer a very different thing. It is not easily done, but continued, thoughtful, prayerful effort will at last arouse the worshipful nature and result in a general religious quickening. The child will thus be started on the right road before he knows it, doubts it, or chooses it for himself. The effort may seem difficult, but it will pay large dividends in the after life.

2. What Can be Done During the Intelligent Period?—When this period arrives (it extends from four or five to ten or twelve) a very

different line of training becomes possible. Our appeal to the senses may be continued with good results—in fact we never reach a place in life where this is not in order. All our religious forms and ceremonies have an indirect value here. They greatly impress the religious sense of a child through the eye gate. But at the beginning of this period the child becomes a self-conscious being. He now remembers experiences as his own. He is not so largely a creature of instinct and organic impulse as before. Reason, intelligence, will, are dawning factors in the child's life. Our methods of training must correspondingly change.

We will find the child who has previously lived in a religious atmosphere, as well as others, entering this period with very crude notions of religious things. Some of them will seem almost idolatrous, and others entirely sacrilegious. We must now, gradually, and in a simple, natural way, correct these notions. But let us not destroy the sense of the supernatural and bring the child into a barren, dry rationalism. Only see that his religious notions keep pace with his unfolding faculties and his notions of other things.

This is the question period. The child of this age has a question about everything—religious or otherwise. Let us be careful how we answer questions. The question may sound ridiculous, but if asked in good faith it is a fatal mistake to use it as the basis of a laugh or to make it the subject of a joke with the neighbors in the child's presence. A mother had a bright little boy of six who when away from home learned to "say grace" at the table. Upon coming home he asked his mother if he might continue it. She gladly consented, for she was delighted at the apparent religiousness of her boy. After a time the mother and little son went, for a visit, to her brother's home. While saying grace at dinner the little boy made a "slip of the tongue" and a queer sentence. The uncle used the little mistake as the basis for much teasing, and when the evening meal came the little boy refused to "say grace," but cried instead. Senseless ridicule proved a fatal stumbling-block in that child's religious career. We must deal patiently, and intelligently, with children's crudities in religious things as well as in others. We must expect a child to think as a child, understand as a child, and speak as a child. Any unsympathetic treatment of a child's religious life, especially any making sport of his childish notions and questions, will be poison in the youthful blood.

Religious instruction as such may now begin. The understanding reaches, at the beginning of this period, a point where it can grasp the simple truths of religion. It is not yet time to begin systematic instruction in the Bible or the Catechism. This is not in place until toward the close of this period, say from eight to nine years. But through picture and story, and even by direct teaching, the child will now receive some broad general ideas of God's presence, of the reality of prayer, and of the meaning of worship and service. In other words, it is not the time for the philosophy of religion but for the objective, practical truths in working form. This we believe to be vitally important, for in actual practice the majority of parents and teachers, so far as they do anything toward the religious training of the child in this period, spend their strength in trying to teach truths the child cannot grasp. Then toward the close of the period, as the time of greatest memory draws near, pile in the Bible, the Catechism, and all else that a Christian must know and believe in order to his soul's health. But let it be a pure memory exercise: attempt no philosophy, as the period has not yet come for that. Attempt at too much in any period may only result in confusion, and perhaps in stubborn dislike of all religious things.

This period is the Golden Age for Bible picture and Bible story. The parent, the Sunday school teacher, the Junior superintendent, and, in fact, all workers among children, ought to study and pray for the power to tell in simple, graphic, entertaining manner the beautiful stories from the word of God. The mind is in condition to enjoy and to profit by storied truth. In a literary way we provide for this quality of child mind by giving them *Mother Goose,* Æsop's *Fables,* Grimm's *Fairy Tales,* and *Robinson Crusoe* rather than Macaulay's *History* and Butler's *Analogy.* The child mind is the same in the religious sphere as in the literary. Religious teachers will do well to adapt their work to the peculiar capabilities of the child at the time. Here is the secret of a success not usually attained either in home or church. We have not appealed to present interests. We have sought to feed children philosophy and big-word theology, when, by virtue of their deepest constitution, they were only prepared to receive and enjoy picture and story.

Then during this period children may be led to take a real interest in the welfare of others. Selfishness, in the beginning of child life, is woven into the very fiber of the being. The native reactions are at first all in the interest of self. Gradually, however, from the beginning of this intelligent period the child may be trained to feel for and help those who may need his help. Toward the close of this period, at about eight or nine years, the child has a ready soil for the seeds of benevolence, charity, and general human kindness. The wise guardian of the child's religious life will seek during this period to interest him in cheering the lives of others who are less favored than himself. The bouquet for the sick child, the dainties carried to the aged invalid, the necessities of life distributed to the destitute, are not only helpful to those who receive them, but leave a deep religious impress on the heart and mind of the child engaged in this Christlike work. One Junior League superintendent tells of a successful effort made to promote this sort of work in his society. The Juniors met for their devotional service on Sunday afternoon. At the close of the meeting the superintendent selected some of the best singers to accompany him to the home of an aged "shut-in." The songs and prayers and happy faces of the children greatly cheered the old saint. The Juniors were delighted. Many such meetings were held, by different members, until all had part in the beneficent work. This is only one practical plan for carrying out this general line of training.

It is not intended here to advise an unnatural and unwholesome burdening of the child heart with the cares and sorrows of others. Childhood is the time to be free and happy. But a proper amount of sympathy with the afflictions of others, and wise, cheerful effort to relieve them, will properly balance faith and works, give an appropriate channel for the active responses natural to the child under the teaching then received, and steady and fix the unfolding Christian character. We need not fear to bring a sensible thought and sober deed to the child's attention. All play and no work makes many a "Jack" a "good-for-nothing" for life.

The close of this period is the harvest time for memory work. We have before noted that the time of greatest memory is at about eleven years. At about ten years hard memory work should be done on the Bible, the Catechism, and many other things of this kind. No explanation, just pure memory work; but plenty of it.

3. What Can be Done During the Ethical Period?—This period arises at about the time of adolescence, or at about ten or twelve years of age. We have previously noted the radical changes which take place in the beginning of this period—changes in both body and mind. We now plead for adaptation of the methods of training to the new activities and powers of the child. We must remember that the child has now become a fully conscious, reasonable, personally responsible being. We must address him as such. The

change in our methods must be as radical as the change in the being to be trained.

One principle of general application is that when we pass from childhood into adolescence our training must consist less of mere rules, traditions, habits, and authority, and more largely of appeals to the reason, the individual freedom and will. We must never make the mistake of treating the adolescent as we treat the younger child. A natural feeling of independence and self-enlargement in the child makes this fatal. The parent or church worker who underestimates the size and importance of an adolescent makes a fatal mistake in the beginning. After a few years have passed we delight in being called "boys" and "girls," but in adolescence we greatly prefer "young ladies" and "young gentlemen." These may be used without any deceit or impropriety. The adolescent is a philosopher. Meet him fully, squarely, candidly, kindly. If he seems to be carping, check him firmly, but kindly. Lead the young mind, and do not permit it to drag you. Teach before he questions. Show the boy and girl that you have passed over this road before them and landed right, and you will preserve their respect and confidence and, with the exception of a few abnormal cases, they will follow your leading. I studied the manner in which a preacher met the questioning of his sixteen-year-old son concerning the Bible and the vital parts of Christian experience. He belabored the boy with heated argument in a parlor full of company. No wonder the boy was driven to unbelief and wandering from the Church. Intelligent, patient, but positive and clear explanation in private would have won. This meeting and vanishing of questions and doubts, under the personal influence of a respected and loved parent or teacher, is a common necessity in the experience of adolescents, and nothing can take its place. Prayer, however earnest, and entreaty, though it be watered with tears, furnish no substitute. Adolescence brings its religious storm as well as its mental and physical storm, and the thing to be done by the religious guardian is to enter into close relations with the disturbed soul, and by intelligent, kind treatment allay the storm and bring the soul to a safe haven. It can be done: it must be done.

One general feature of adolescence is very prominent: its *suddenness*. This period begins with an abruptness of change not seen in any of the others. The wise guardian will seek to counteract the danger of calamity in such a sudden change by providing for some of the new duties before they actually arrive. Bits of duty, responsibility, and information will be given toward the close of the last period as a preparation for this. This suddenness is also an added reason for continuing a close confidential relation with the adolescent. In so many new experiences and duties he needs the constant help of an experienced friend.

Another general characteristic of this period is *secretiveness*. This makes the work of the spiritual adviser difficult. Of this characteristic Professor Coe says: "It is true, no doubt, that youth easily assumes an air of self-sufficiency, independence, even self-assertiveness; but, as often as not, this is a weapon for self-defense adopted by those who do not feel altogether at home or altogether certain of themselves. It is like the air of confidence assumed by an explorer upon meeting a band of savages whose intentions toward him he nevertheless distrusts. The inner self of the youth shrinks from revealing itself, yet it longs to reveal itself if only it is certain of being understood. Stiff-necked and obstinately self-contained toward all attempts to drive or forge it, the heart of youth is nevertheless more docile than that of a child toward one who understands it and is willing to impart to it the guidance it so sorely needs."[1]

The adolescent conscience has been closely

[1] *The Spiritual Life*, p. 57.

studied in recent years. Some important facts for religious training have been made evident. The newly awakened ethical sense often gives to conscience an unnatural severity. Experience has not yet led to that maturity and breadth of judgment which leads to the proper weighing of moral questions. Trifles are sometimes looked upon as all-important while that which is paramount is put down as subordinate. A girl of twelve was so impressed that she ought never to say anything evil of another that she became afraid to speak of anyone lest her words should be wrongly interpreted. Her principle, so morbidly applied, did more harm than good. A farmer's son was constantly impressed with the thought that whatever he did he ought to do to perfection. He was driving the reaping machine, and every now and then he would go back to pull up the stray stalks which the machine missed. This he did not for the value of the grain saved, but for carrying out a morbid principle of conscience. Such things seem very trivial to older people, but to the morbid youth they are the essentials. It requires very careful training at this point that the youthful conscience may not be led into laxity, and yet be delivered from trivialities, that it may give itself to really important matters.

This morbid conscience frequently manifests itself in religious despair. This experience is common in churches which put much stress on "assurance" and the "witness of the Spirit." Professor Coe investigated a number of cases to find out how many youths are afflicted with this morbid religiousness. He found it present in forty per cent of the young men and forty-four per cent of the young ladies. In nearly all cases it was connected with a disordered nervous system or with a season of ill health. One of the cases coming to Professor Coe's attention was that of a young girl who had become a mental and physical wreck under the delusion that she had committed the unpardonable sin. There are more of such morbid cases than ever come to light. How shall we treat them? We will not know of their existence, or of their nature, unless we are on intimate terms with the adolescent. Everything that tends to build up the general health, and that of the nervous system in particular, will tend to dispel religious morbidness. Proper food and exercise, a healthy mental activity, enlivening social pleasure, and perhaps in some cases a course of medical treatment, will do good. But the best remedy of all, supplementing and making effective those above given, is the loving, sympathetic, confidential relation between the youth and some older person who appreciates all that the youth is passing through. This sympathetic personage may be found in the parents, if they are wise enough, or in pastor, Sunday school teacher, or Junior superintendent.

In our study of conversion we found that the child, properly surrounded and trained up to the adolescent period, does then naturally and easily with his fully self-determinative powers choose Christ and his service for life, and will, consequently, never know a moment of conscious separation from God. This does not imply, however, that the adolescent choice may not be accompanied with questionings, and even doubts and fears. On the contrary, this is the case usually. There is no "royal road" to heaven, though we begin in our earliest youth. Neither does it imply that the youth passing through this great change is beyond the need of all possible help from wise teaching and loving counsel and companionship from the guardians of his religious welfare. On the other hand, it will be readily seen that this is a time when such help is most needed.

It is further shown that the majority of people who wander from God and are rescued are converted during the adolescent period. A number of investigators have tabulated the results of their investigations in large numbers of cases. They all agree that conversion is confined almost entirely to the period between ten and twenty years of age, the greatest number falling between ten and fifteen. Bishop D. A. Goodsell has been giving the young preachers whom he receives into Methodist Conferences an object lesson on the importance of attending to the religious life of the children. After asking the young men to face the Conference he asks all present who were converted between the ages of ten and fifteen to rise. At this invitation a majority of the preachers arise. Then he asks for those converted between fifteen and twenty. A smaller number respond. These first two invitations take nearly all the Conference. In the later five-year periods there is a rapidly decreasing number, until almost none are found who were converted beyond thirty-five.

These facts lay upon the guardians of the religious welfare of children a very special responsibility during the adolescent period. If at the beginning of this period the parent wakes up to the fact that the child is consciously astray, this is the time to seek his conversion. If he emerges from this period without Christ he will most likely be without him forever. This is also the time when the wise church seeks to reap its chief harvest of members. What can be done to help on this good work? Does it need any helping? Or shall we sit by and wait till nature or some irresistible grace lands the youth in the kingdom? No! This is too largely the present practice. Teach the great truths of the Bible? Yes. Seek to lead the youth into proper associations? By all means! Pray? Yes, without ceasing! But, above all, seek by intelligent, loving personal intercourse to arouse the youth to his privilege and duty and to lead him into fellowship with Christ and divine things. This is confessedly a difficult task, but grace and wisdom will be given if we try; and the youth who is not exceptionally abnormal will be won for the master before "the harvest is past."

CHAPTER III

TRAINING MUST BE ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

One cannot think of a single principle of pedagogy which if applied to all cases would not violate the deepest needs of some whom we try to help. General principles are of value in that they fit directly into the needs of most cases and prepare us to judge more intelligently of the needs of the odd cases. They also inspire us to originate methods of training adapted to the individual needs, when they are peculiar.

Method suited to the individual is prominent in the thought of the progressive educators of to-day. In an article on "The Line of Educational Advance," Dr. G. Stanley Hall says: "Individual methods will be more used. The elective system long ago recognized that the same course was not equally adapted to all, and options are now in the high, and even in the grammar grades. Mr. Search has advocated a method looking toward individual instruction in all the public schools, and would consider it ground for just complaint against a teacher if pupils had marked abilities in certain directions which the teacher had never discovered. To fit growing minds with proper spheres of unfoldment is a most serious cause, a life and career saving or marring vocation. I think our large colleges will devise more effective ways of protecting their students against wrong elections, and will seek ways and means of knowing something of the individuality of students and of adapting work to bring out what is best in them. Child study points to this same end, and is already able to suggest some means toward attaining it."[1] What these wise educators see as a necessity in the school and college is doubly necessary in our moral and religious work with children.

If all children were alike the problem of their religious training would be greatly simplified, and we would soon be able to find infallible methods which would bring the answer in every case. But no two are exactly alike. Each is an individual and therefore essentially unique. I have seen two children of the same parents, twins, greatly different in every way. The one a blonde, the other a brunette. One was quick and impulsive, the other slow and calculating. It is evident that, if the same methods of training be used with those

[1] *Outlook*, August 5, 1889, p. 769.

children, one, if not both, will fail to receive the very help and culture needed.

Dr. A. H. Bradford has said: "All schemes of culture should begin with the recognition that each child is different from every other; and that the lines of difference run far back, and therefore are not superficial, and that, in order to secure the highest efficiency, systems of education should be adapted to the individuals to be reached. Every child possesses characteristics which are the result of forces running through generations, for which it is not responsible, and which can be changed only by the most carefully planned and wisely adjusted discipline."[1] This quotation is given because it lays due emphasis upon individuality—the fact that it is deep seated—and that in order to change any of these inherited peculiarities there must be wise method adapted to the needs of the individual.

The wise parent will find it comparatively easy to study the individual characteristics of the children of the family and adapt method to need. The task is much more difficult in the church because of the larger number of individuals to study and the shorter time for so doing. Here it ought to be said that individual differences are very marked in the moral and religious realm. I be-

[1] *Heredity and Christian Problems*, p. 124.

lieve that a large part of the misunderstanding, false training, and ruinous failures might be avoided by a more intelligent study of the individual children on the part of all who have to do with their religious culture. Here is a field for most diligent study and most careful and prayerful effort.

CHAPTER IV

THE MOTOR SIDE OF RELIGIOUS TRAINING

Throughout the whole realm of religious training we have much to learn from the advanced educational methods of our day. We ought to lead. So far from that, we are surprisingly slow to follow. Development through self-activity has become an accepted maxim in the educational sphere. The principle is that activity is, on the one hand, the cause of proper impulse and emotion, and, on the other, it is a natural and healthful response to impulse and emotion.

Activity is the watchword of modern pedagogy. I quote again from Dr. G. Stanley Hall: "At best school conditions are very unnatural: the constant sitting of children who were made to be in constant motion; seats too often favoring cramped attitudes, curvatures, etc.; the imperfect lighting of many schoolrooms, and the reading, which itself requires a great and constant amount of work by the tiny eye-muscles; wagging the pen and the tongue—all these three sets of small muscles are overexercised, while the larger muscles have little work to do. The precept, therefore, now is to add a motor side whenever possible in every study. The muscles average forty-six per cent of the whole body by weight, expend a large share of its energies, are the only organs of the will, are also important organs of the higher digestion; their development causes marked and proportionate brain growth, and the school of the future will lay greater stress upon methods and matter in which voluntary motion is involved than it has ever done in the past. Young children cannot exercise their minds to good effect when sitting still. Gymnasia, competitive games, sports of all kinds, concerted plays, exercises, field excursions, military drill, manual training, etc., are all likely to develop in the near future an ever-richer repertory of educational methods."[1] The time was when all education was simply the training of the verbal memory. That of course developed only one little spot of the brain. Later, object lessons and then nature lessons broadened the sphere of education. But to-day the effort is to develop every part of the body, because it is found that muscle building, properly conducted, is brain building.

These principles, so well intrenched in the sphere of education, have an equally important application in the realm of religious training. We

[1] *Outlook*, August 5, 1889, p. 768.

have long believed and taught that works grow out of faith: we now see that the reverse principle is also true: faith grows out of works. At least we have learned that our activities have an immense influence over our feelings, our affections, and our faith. President W. L. Hervey says: "Religious feeling in the child may arise from thinking or from doing. So religious feeling is the resultant, not merely of religious insight, but also of religious activity; and imitative activities are the fundamental sources of religious feeling. Religious feeling is a social product before it becomes an individualistic problem. The child should be started on the right road before he knows it, doubts, or chooses it for himself."[1] One great mistake in the religious training of the past is that we have appealed too exclusively to the memory spot of the brain. It has particularly failed on the motor side. We have outlined it thus: understand religious truth, feel, do—this and this only. Now we see that we must supplement that with another: do, feel, understand. The last is in all probability the natural program of religious facts in the beginning of child life. The former has large application to the adult and but little to the child. We have been attempting a program largely impossible. We have failed to

[1] Chautauqua Lecture, 1897.

act on the sure principle of President Hervey, that religious feeling or experience arises from suitable action as well as from understanding, from doing as well as from thinking. The religious instinct is always present in the child, but it awaits a proper stimulus to arouse it to action. This stimulus may come from proper activity as well as from proper understanding of religious truth. Lead the child to proper religious attitudes and action, and the proper religious feelings and responses will naturally result. The wise parent will study and pray to find methods of religious activity for the child's earliest years. Happily the little immortal is a great imitator, and will easily and naturally do what the elders do in his presence, and will feel somewhat as his elders feel. The imitative action may thus be the stimulus to arouse the natural religious responses, feelings, and experiences.

Thus at the very time when we have thought nothing can be done a thousand things may be done. Before many months have passed the whole motor side of the parent's religious life may be ingrafted into the life of the child and the proper responses secured. Prayer, singing, helpfulness to others, the means of grace at home and in church, all these, in ways suited, may be made the sphere of activities for the growing child. The mother or father kneeling reverently at the family altar may by a word lead the child into the same attitude, and thus indirectly into the same feeling of reverence, love, and worship. This once accomplished will be easier ever afterward. The religious impulse is awakened, spiritual feelings aroused, and the thrill of soul communion experienced. This will seem to many like idle theory and impracticable speculation, but many are really accomplishing it, and the great throng of boys and girls who reach ten and twelve years without ever having their religious instinct really aroused to activity, and the other great throng who never experience such religious arousement, testify that there is a radical defect in our religious training somewhere, and perhaps manywheres. One great fundamental lack is in a failure to arouse and develop the religious feelings of children in their earliest years from the motor side.

Another side of motor training in the religious sphere is that in which we seek to lead the child to an appropriate activity as the result of every religious feeling or impression. In our very constitution the Lord has joined together impression and active response. In our defective practice we have put them asunder. Professor William James says: "No reception without reaction, no impression without correlative expression—this is the great maxim which the teacher ought never forget. An impression which simply flows in at the pupil's eyes or ears, and in no way modifies his active life, is an impression gone to waste. It leaves no fruits behind it in the way of capacity acquired. Even as mere impression it fails to produce its proper effect upon the memory; for, to remain fully among the acquisitions of this latter faculty, it must be wrought into the whole cycle of our operations. Its motor consequences are what clinch it. Some effect due to it in the way of an activity must return to the mind in the form of the sensation of having acted, and connect itself with the impression. The most durable impressions are those on account of which we speak, or act, or else are inwardly convulsed."[1] The religious life of both adults and children lacks too largely the clinching of motor activity. Let us not stop with portraying the dying love of Christ until the tears stand in the children's eyes, but let us go farther, and by plans of our own lead the children to show by their active life that they appreciate that dying love. Here is a large, uncultivated, prolific field for religious culture.

[1] *Talks to Teachers*, p. 33.

CHAPTER V.

THE HEART SIDE OF RELIGIOUS TRAINING

Education is paying increased attention to the culture of the feelings, the sentiments, and the emotions. It recognizes these elements of heart life as the basis of our thinking, willing, doing.

This is an important topic for the practical purposes of this book, as the child is so largely a creature of feeling and sentiment. This part of his outfit is developed before the intellect or the will. In this side of his nature the child largely represents the race. That is, he inherits his emotional nature in a state of comparatively full development. Intellect and will depend more largely upon individual cultivation; the feelings and sentiments are largely an inheritance from the race. The child is subject to religious feelings long before the intellect can grasp even the practical truths of religion. Samuel heard the voice of the Lord before his child intellect knew that it was the Lord calling him. Our first appeal should be to the heart. Here there is open to us an avenue for four or five years of training which are seldom used; years of golden opportunity, when the child mind is indeed "wax to receive" religious impressions.

The emotional side of the religious life is susceptible to training. Like other parts of our nature, if it receives proper stimulus, exercise, and food it lives and grows; if it is neglected it weakens and perhaps dies. Dr. G. Stanley Hall says: "Now while the emotive side of our nature is more hereditary than the intellectual, fuller of that 'ancient wealth and worth' which birth alone chiefly gives, it is susceptible nevertheless to the educational influence of the environment to a degree which till recently has hardly been suspected. Fear, anger, love, joy, sorrow, and the rest are educable, and have a long plastic period when they can be formed."[1]

Elizabeth Harrison says: "A young mother whose daughter had been for sometime in a kindergarten came to me and said, 'I have been surprised to see how my little Katherine handles the baby, and how sweetly and gently she talks to him.' I said to the daughter, 'Katherine, where did you learn to talk to baby, and to take care of one so nicely?' 'Why, that's the way we talk to the dolly at the kindergarten!' she replied. Her power of baby loving had been developed definite-

[1] *Outlook*, August 5, 1889, p. 770.

ly by the toy baby."[1] Training had increased her affectional nature.

I knew a beautiful chubby little boy of about three years who had been reared in a home where he was kindly treated, but where there was little affection manifested toward him. The "hug" and the "kiss" were absent. The child became very fond of going to a neighbor's house where the man and his wife were very fond of children, and very affectionate withal. Not many months had passed before these new friends had completely changed the feelings of the little boy. His parents remarked that he had become more affectionate and was very fond of "hugging" and "kissing" them. The natural affection of the child waited for a congenial atmosphere in which to manifest itself and grow. By example, by precept, by the environment provided the emotional natures of children are subject to training in this way or that, or even to dwarfing and death. These are only samples of what is possible in the training of the emotional nature of children.

[1] *A Study of Child Nature*, p. 73.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERSONAL ELEMENT IN RELIGIOUS TRAINING

NATURE'S forces carry their own atmosphere. The sun, without effort, gushes forth its ineffable light, the coals throw off their heat, violets fill a large space with perfume, and spices crowd the house with their odors. Man also has his atmosphere. It is the unspoken and unconscious, though mighty, influence of his personality. It needs no vehicle to convey it. It flashes immediately from soul to soul. This personal element alone can give force to our words. Sometimes a speaker is polished, and fluent, but lacking in personal force, and therefore as powerless as a glittering rainbow. Sometimes the manner is crude and the language deficient, but the personality back of them is so evidently genuine that a deep impression is made upon us. Edward Everett insisted that Daniel Webster's eyes, during his great speeches, literally "emitted sparks."

Julia H. Johnston, in an excellent article on "Impressions upon Baby Minds," says: "There are uncounted elements in the teacher's life and character, in her own spiritual atmosphere, in voice, and look, and manner, which will combine to fix impressions upon little hearts. No amount of mere technical preparation of the lesson, no accumulation of illustrations and object lessons, nothing that the teacher may do will take the place of what she must be in order to influence all the children, and most of all the youngest. It is the old and ever-recurring truth, which we must assimilate till it becomes the fiber of the fabric of life, that what we are counts for more than what we do."[1]

Personal impression is a wide open gateway to the young child's soul. Professor Baldwin says: "It is only necessary to watch a two-year-old closely to see what members of the family are giving him his personal copy; to find out whether he sees his mother constantly and his father seldom; whether he plays much with other children, and what their dispositions are, to a degree; whether he is growing to be a person of subjection, equality, or tyranny; whether he is assimilating the elements of some low, unorganized social content from his foreign nurse. For, in Leibnitz's phrase, the boy or girl is a social monad, a little world which reflects the whole system of influences coming to stir its sensibilities. And just in as far as his sensibilities are stirred he

[1] *Sunday School Journal*, January, 1889, p. 54.

imitates and forms habits of imitating; and habits —they are character."[1] This is personality appealing direct to personality. It is making an impression and influencing character long before the period of understanding on the child's part.

In the first two years or more of the child's life the only possible avenue of direct religious training is by means of this personal impress. The mother is particularly near to the child. Dr. G. Stanley Hall has said, "The mother's face and voice are the first conscious objects, as the infant soul unfolds, and she soon comes to stand in the very place of God to her child."[2] The earliest religious training is largely personal impression. It is ours to see that no wrong impression is made, and that the proper religious personality is continually impressing itself upon the growing child.

Drs. G. Stanley Hall and J. R. Street closely questioned 183 persons to find out what teacher had had greatest influence over them and what about that teacher impressed them most. Of the result they say: "From the showing of the table, and the testimony of the writers, it is safe to conclude, first, that there is an unconscious educative force emanating from the teacher's personality

[1] *Mental Development: Methods and Processes*, p. 357.

[2] *Pedagogical Seminary*, 1891. Article on "Moral and Religious Training of Children."

and so operating upon the pupil as to become a powerful formative agent in the development of his character. Second, this force, being unconscious in its origin and in its attracting and transforming effect upon the plastic nature of the young, has its origin in what the teacher is rather than what he says. Third, it is a significant fact that 149 out of a possible 183 mention the manner of the teacher as exerting such an influence over their natures. It has been said of more than one man—as of the Earl of Chatham—that 'everybody felt that there was something finer in the man than anything he ever said.' It is this very something in the teacher that will go down deeper than his words, and either purify or befoul the springs of action in his pupils."[1] This is important testimony to the power of personal impression.

Bishop C. C. McCabe was only eight years old when he came into conscious fellowship with Christ. His father and mother were devoted members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The good bishop says, "If anyone should ask me what most impressed me in my boyhood days I would answer: The sight of my father coming out from the secret place of prayer every day at noon." This impression was a personal one and led the young boy into the Christian life and experience.

[1] *U. S. Report of Commissioner of Education*, 1897, vol. ii, p. 1340.

No rules or methods of training are good enough, or scientific enough, or natural enough, to succeed without this personal element. The Christlike personality must be present to give meaning and force to the best method. When the news of the battle of Manila Bay reached Constantinople the Sultan sent for the American Minister, Dr. Angell, and asked if it would be possible for Turkey to secure the same kind of guns which Dewey had on his fleet. Dr. Angell replied that he thought it quite possible to buy the guns. "But," he added, "there is one thing you cannot buy. You cannot buy the men behind the guns." You can buy rules, methods, and suggestions for religious training, but you cannot buy the impressive personality, that is a matter of character.

Bishop J. H. Vincent, when a young pastor, wrote to Dr. Stephen Tyng, one of the most progressive and energetic of the early Sunday school workers in this country, asking for a copy of the constitution of his famous Sunday school. Dr. Tyng sent a prompt and courteous reply, saying, "I am sorry I cannot come." Dr. Tyng was his own Sunday school constitution. This was perhaps an overdoing of the personal element, but after all the constitution or method which succeeds must be incarnated in personality. Children are strongly imitative. Speak God's name reverently, and they will do the same; sing heartily, and they will follow; be devout in prayer, and they will be devout; be orderly, prompt, gentle, and polite, and the average child will copy you faithfully.

CHAPTER VII

TRAINING TO COUNTERACT HEREDITARY DEFECTS

THE physician who should give the same dose to all his patients would not be less wise than the religious pedagogue who uses the same sort of training with all the children who come under his care. Heredity strongly stamps the earliest reactions and life of the child. Often this heredity is largely vicious, affecting for evil the whole nature; sometimes it seems to focus upon one particular spot in the moral nature. It is the business of the wise parent to find out early the native responses, study them, note the defects or perversions, and adapt conditions and training to their correction. Elizabeth Harrison has set forth this element of training, "Like Nehemiah of old, build up the wall where it is weakest; if your child is selfish it is unselfishness he needs; if he is untruthful it is accuracy which is lacking; perhaps he is tyrannical to the younger brother or sister; it is the element of nurture or tenderness which should be developed."[1]

This sort of training supposes sufficient intelli-

[1] *A Study of Child Nature*, p. 31.

gence and studious effort on the part of those who train children to really see the defects to be overcome and adapt training to the needs of the case. In order to this we must know the child thoroughly, know him personally, know him intimately at home, school, and at church. We must not only know him when he thinks we are looking, but when he is acting out his own inner self as if unobserved. All this is possible. The parent has first chance to obtain such accurate information. The teacher and church worker have less opportunity, yet they may accomplish much by earnest, patient, intelligent observation.

Professor George E. Dawson, of Clark University, investigated the cases of 52 moral delinquents and found that they had in nearly every case "parents that were intemperate, improvident, or criminal."[1] Professor J. R. Street says: "The heredity of the child should be as carefully studied as the strain of cattle with which the farmer would stock his acres, and any physical weakness or tendency to weakness in his ancestry should be made known to him in order that he may be on his guard, lest the enemy that lurks in ambuscade in his very veins may attack him unawares. The forces of environment should be so controlled as to destroy, as far as possible, any hereditary taint

[1] *Pedagogical Seminary*, December, 1896.

and at the same time strengthen and develop any predispositions to moral rectitude and manliness of life."[1]

Some families are irreligious for generations. In some cases this irreligiousness exists along with moral and business integrity, in others with general vice and crime. In either case both heredity and environment must be taken into account when dealing with the child religiously. The training in such cases must be suited to the development of the sense of God, religious feeling, and reverence. What a boon to a child who has the misfortune of being born in an irreligious home is the training at church which leads him to earnest, heartfelt prayer and devotion. The stream of evil heredity is thereby checked and the life current is started toward God.

In other families intemperance and other delinquencies have become firmly intrenched by generations of vice. At home and school and church the training must take these facts into account and fortify against their recurrence in the individual's life. To wisely adapt training requires that we shall not only know the individual, but also his father and grandfather, his mother and grandmother.

[1] *Pedagogical Seminary*, July, 1897.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW TO CULTIVATE RELIGIOUS HABITS

Here is a very large field for training, and one which has been very little cultivated. The intellectual, moral, and religious spheres have been very slow to realize the value of habit. Habit has not interested us as much as the miraculously and tragically supernatural in religious life. We have long recognized it in the mechanical and physical realm. Manual habit enables the mechanic to finish his product regularly after an approved pattern. Moral habit is the fiber of moral character. Religious habit is the trustworthy part of religious character. Even in the religious realm we can only trust ourselves implicitly to do that which has become habitual with us. Habits once formed are in most cases lifelong.

After thirty-five years' absence Bishop J. H. Vincent visited his birthplace, Tuscaloosa, Ala. He was desirous of seeing the house where he was born and was anxious to find it for himself. So he said, "Take me to the Methodist Church and I can find it; for I remember so well just how my mother used to take me back and forth from the house to the church." He was shown to the church, and easily found the house of his birth. He did but follow the path which had become familiar to him by the religious habits of his early youth. Not only the habit of going to and from the church had endured in the life of this good man, but also the habits of prayer, devotion, and general religiousness.

Rules for the training of habit in general have specific application to the forming of religious habits. Here I summarize from the teachings of Professors Bain and William James:

1. In Forming a New Habit Launch the New Course of Life with as Great Momentum as Possible.—Focus all the conditions which may add vim to the new line of life. Such a start lessens the temptation to break down, and every day that the breakdown is postponed adds to the chances of its not occurring at all. When you start to teach your child to pray have the time, place, and every other condition as favorable as possible. When you start his churchgoing habit see to it that he goes to the right service and is in best possible position to start with a favorable impression and a desire to go again, and again.

2. Never Suffer an Exception to Occur Until the New Habit is Securely Rooted in the Life.—Each slip is like letting fall a ball

of string which one is winding; a single slip undoes more than many turns will wind again. Continuity of training is the great means of making the nervous system act infallibly right. The practical side of this maxim in religious training is self-evident. Be regular, systematic, faithful, never failing in your religious exercises intended to influence and mold the religious life of the child. See to it that the child is regular in his habits of prayer, churchgoing, and other religious exercises: this neglected and there is no training in any strict sense. There is so much looseness in the religious life of the average home; slips are so easily made and excuses so readily formed that it is little wonder the children grow up without religious habits—except perhaps the habit of irregularity.

3. Seize the Very First Possible Opportunity to Act on the New Resolution Made, or the New Emotional Prompting which is in the Direction of the Desired Habit.—Hell is proverbially paved with good intentions. It is not the emotion or the intention which is registered in the nerves gives set to the brain and establishes habit. Every time a resolve or a fine glow of feeling evaporates without bearing practical fruit it is worse than a chance lost; it works so as to hinder future resolutions and emotions

from taking the normal path of discharge in action. The motor side of the religious training of children is the neglected side. We seek to teach them to know many things, and to feel many things, and to *do* nothing. Religious habits cannot be formed by such a process. As a result the average child comes to maturity knowing much, and feeling much, but with no backbone of religious action and habit.

4. Don't Preach Too Much to the Children, or Abound in Good Talk in the Abstract. Rather Lie in Wait for Practical Opportunities to Set the Child to Work.— These opportunities abound; be quick to seize them as they pass. We are not quick at seeing them because they are so little used. The field is fertile, but you will find the hardships usually experienced by a pioneer. By such a course you will get the child to think, feel, and act at the same time. The strokes of behavior are what give the new set to the character and work the new habits into its organic tissue.

CHAPTER IX

HOW TO CULTIVATE REVERENCE

THIS is said to be an irreverent age. The age which preceded us overdid reverence. In Church and State there was a false devotion to many things which were merely human—creeds, pictures, and places. The age in which we live began its career by a rebellion against these superstitions. As is nearly always the case in rebellions, too much was swept away. The tendency is not only to swing away from reverence for unworthy objests, but even from reverence for God. In the whole range of topics treated in this book none is more important than the one now under discussion.

In Harriet Martineau's *Household Education* is a chapter on reverence. She teaches that a child defective in this virtue should not simply be told about it, criticised or chided, but needs primarily to have his eyes opened to the wonders of creation. Such a child should be brought to feel the awe and majesty that comes when we intelligently contemplate the works of nature. Even a little child, through the simple instruction possible to his understanding, may be led to feel the presence of the Creator and be hushed into reverence. On the other hand, the child who is over-reverent, timid, fearful, superstitious, ought not to be laughed at or ridiculed, but have the power which is within him developed until courage and self-reliance restore the lacking balance of his character.

The honoring of father and mother, as the Scriptures command, is a first step toward reverencing God. The "spoiled child" has no idea of authority anywhere. The old-fashioned parental authority was rather exacting, but it created a sense of authority, and a habit of obedience thereto, which was decidedly healthful. A childhood which is pampered and whimmed will not cultivate reverence for anybody or anything except perhaps for itself. Dr. G. Stanley Hall, in a *Study of Fears,* makes this sensible remark: "A childhood too happy, and careless, and fearless, is a calamity so great that prayer against it might stand in the old English Service Book beside the petition that 'our children be not poltroons.' "[1] There is a sober element, akin to fear, in all reverence, and hence the false idea of childish joy, which divests it of all sober, sensible thought, care and fear, tends toward training a being to whom reverence is unnatural, if not impossible.

[1] *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. viii, p. 243.

Besides training the child to "feel" the presence of God in nature, and cultivating the sense of obedience to rightful authority, much can be done by direct effort. Gradually and carefully, by every possible means we should lead the child to feel more personally the presence of God. By our own reverent devotions, by look, voice, and every attitude of real worship we instill reverence into the child. But the worship must have the quality of genuineness, for the child is quick to distinguish between the tinsel of mere attitudes and the gold of hearty devotion. Then by explanation of prayer as "a talk with God," and other such simple efforts, we may help to make devotion natural and easy to the child, and thus help him to realize the touch of God upon his soul. God talked with Samuel—called him three times—before Samuel knew that it was God. The wisdom of Eli made it plain to the little boy, and then he talked with God in an intelligent manner. A calm, sensible, businesslike talk, at the proper time, would lead many a child into the blessed experience of reverent worship.

Rightly understood the telltale body proclaims every mood of the soul. The expression of the face, the posture of the hands and arms, the position of the head, and many other bodily attitudes, are natural expressions of the experience prevailing within. The kneeling posture, the clasped hands, the closed eyes, all these are natural expressions of the devout, worshipful spirit. The posture of the head is to be particularly noted. The rapt and devout saint, who thinks not of earth but of heaven, turns his face skyward, and some gleams from the celestial hills seem to light it with glory. The penitent and humbled sinner tells the story of his wrongdoing, of his sorrow and grief, by the bowed face wrinkled with care and stained with tears. These are but examples of a long list of bodily expressions commonly recognized as outward signs of soul states.

The reverse of this—the effect of bodily attitudes in changing and molding the feelings of the soul—is not so generally appreciated. Yet it is surely true that outward gesture and attitude react upon the inward states. The soul speaks through the body and the body in turn commands and influences the soul. The soldier boy is taught the military position not only because he looks well when erect, but because the attitude of courage engenders this soldierly virtue. No element, perhaps, is more lacking in the religious training of our bones than that of a quiet, soulful, timeful, devout, reverent, family worship, in which the children not only remain quiet and listless, but where the worship is so planned that they take active part. They should be given an opportunity to sing; this they can do at a very early age. Then as soon as they become able they should join in the "verse-about" reading of the Scripture lesson, and John or Mary may lead in the Lord's Prayer at the close of the extempore prayer by father or mother, and all should be taught very early to observe every proper attitude of prayer and worship.

Meditative, reverent worship is utterly impossible with much of the "hurry scurry" of our modern life. The rushing family altar, with only time for a short chapter and a hurried prayer, the bustling Sunday school where noise reigns from beginning to end, with only a moment or two of silence during prayer, the impatient mother teaching the child his Catechism while she ties his necktie for church, the loud-singing, hustling service of the sanctuary, with a grand rush to get through in a limited number of minutes, furnish neither time nor place nor opportunity for reverence to take root and grow. All of these agencies are losing much of their efficiency because they fail to recognize the fact that the child must be in gentle, quiet frame of mind before he can be in right religious attitude and be prepared for hearty, reverent worship.

CHAPTER X

HOW TO TRAIN THE WILL

HERE we have the most difficult problem in the entire training of the child, and one which is at the basis of all training. We must learn to handle properly the freewill being or we cannot train him. The problem, in a nutshell, is how to secure from the child perfect obedience to the right authorities in life, and at the same time have the child retain and develop the power of self-determination or will. It is the problem of proper obedience, the problem of the will, the problem of character. Professor G. T. Ladd has truly said, "The habitual modes of my voluntary reactions I call my character." Emerson said, "Unless a man has a will within him you can tie him to nothing." J. S. Mill said, "Character is nothing more than a perfectly fashioned will."

The correct method of training the will may perhaps be most clearly set forth by presenting the two great errors on this subject:

1. THE CRUSHING OF THE WILL THROUGH OVERDOING COMPULSORY OBEDIENCE.—There is a compulsion which is necessary and right. In

the earliest years of his life the child's mental powers are in such immaturity as to render his own choices of little value. He is at first purely a creature of impulse. He follows his instincts and inherited tendencies, except when prevented by authority from without. Then follows a period when the child pauses before action is entered upon. Deliberation in some degree begins. More and more this deliberate suspense becomes a matter of will. Experience becomes the great teacher; it soon teaches the necessity of deliberation and the choice of the proper line of conduct, and also the consequences of the different courses of life. Finally, when maturity is reached, the child stands on a level with other human beings to "give and take" advice, and to obey what he considers rightful authority. At the various stages of this developing life decreasing degrees of compulsion are necessary and proper until, finally, none is in place. Herbert Spencer's theory of obedience is most probably correct. He says, "Let the history of your domestic rule typify in little the history of our political rule; at the outset autocratic, control where control is really needful; by and by incipient constitutionalism, in which the liberty of the subject gains some express recognition; successive extension of this liberty of the subject, gradually ending in parental abdication."

Compulsion is overdone when we fail to appeal to the child's reason as far as possible. The end sought is voluntary obedience to the right. Every principle of humanity leads us to appeal to the child's reason. Through the reason reach the feelings or emotions, through the emotions create desire, then deliberation takes place, the will is set, and finally voluntary effort is made to do the thing desired. Thus obedience is gained, and the will power of the individual is exercised and strengthened at the same time. Without this appeal to reason the child under compulsion may follow a right course of life up to maturity, and then when the pressure is removed go with a bound into the ways of evil. Overdoing of parental authority has brought the child up to maturity an infant in strength and will. This is the explanation of the fact that many boys and girls who have been strictly and religiously "brought up" enter upon a wild and reckless career as soon as they begin life for themselves. Unless by personal example and persistent, confidential, loving relationships we can make children realize the truth, beauty, and desirability of the Christian life, their conforming to our rules of religious conduct will be only compulsory obedience, and will likely be very short lived. Only to-day a mother said to me: "My sons are irreligious. It seems very strange to me, for I always heard that if you compel children to go to church when small they will get into the habit of going, and always go. I compelled mine to go, but now when they are grown I cannot induce them to go." Compulsion is right in its place, but if we cannot add to it persuasion, conviction, belief, love, enjoyment, our compulsion will be of little value.

Any method of training which fails to reckon with the child's God-given right to dominion is an overdoing of compulsion. In all our demands for obedience we must remember that we are dealing with a being who was created to govern his own life in a very large measure. Bishop H. W. Warren says, "No promising child is three months old before he seeks dominion over and management of his parents. Young as he is he thinks it his prerogative to bring them up rightly. He lays his hand of power on the cat, dog, horse, engine, and lightning, in turn. It is natural for him. It is what he was made for."[1]

Any method of training which fails to allow for individual traits and characteristics is overdoing compulsion. Roger Ascham very wisely said, "Many schoolmasters, some as I have seen, more as I have heard tell, be of so crooked a nature, as

[1] *Bible in the World's Education*, p. 51.

when they meet with a hard-witted scholar, they rather break him than bow him, rather mar him than mend him." A strait-jacket may be good for the one whose mental faculties are awry, but the milder measures which allow for individuality of temperament and nature are better for the training of the normal individual. Let no theory of training and no determination to have perfect obedience lead the guardian of child life to neglect a careful study of individual characteristics and the proper allowance for them in the demands made. Let nature alone when she is only individual, and transgresses no necessary law. To attempt to force her into conformity with our theories may weaken, and deface, and even destroy her.

There are many little devices which may aid in our efforts at leading the child to voluntarily do the right. (*a*) Give a choice between two things. For example, "You must pick up your playthings and put them away or you cannot have them at all to-morrow." This course gives chance for free will and at the same time, in the great majority of cases, secures the desired obedience. (*b*) System and regularity in the things demanded helps very much toward obedience. The child who knows he must go to bed at half-past seven every evening is not as apt to demur as the one who goes at irregular hours. A friend once sent her twelve-year-old boy away from the table to wash his hands. Upon his return she said, "Why do you persist in coming to the table without washing your hands, when I send you away every time?" "No," he answered; "you forget it sometimes." The forgets break the charm. (*c*) Another device is to give a definite time when anything is to be taken up or left off. For example, "Come in now, it is time for you to practice; you can go play again in an hour."

These are only given as little aids in securing the consent of the child's will in obedience. They are given as samples of the many devices which may be used in securing obedience, and at the same time in training the noblest of human powers—the will.

2. The Other Error in the Training of the Will is that of Letting it Grow Wild; Too Great Laxity.—The result of this course is the "self-willed" or "heady" person, who refuses to be influenced or controlled. Such children make the "prodigals" of the home, the "bad boys" of the school, the "wanderers" from the Church, and the "anarchists" of the State. Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst has written strongly on this point: "It is often said that it is better to rule by love than fear. Without quarreling with parents

upon that point I recur to the point that it is essential that they rule. It is passing strange that in the most difficult of all arts, that of becoming a man, it should be considered that the apprentice can be for the most part left to his own judgment; that hampering a boy by rules and commandments weakens his powers of self-dependence and impairs his chances of personal success. There is a science of manhood and womanhood quite as much as there is of architecture and navigation, and it passes all comprehension how parents can appreciate the need of a rigid observance of precepts and principles in the latter cases and yet imagine that their boys and girls can be left, in nine cases out of ten, to work out the problem of life in their own wild, uncontrolled way. If I may refer to my own experience, I was brought up to obey, and was punished if I did not obey—yes, was whipped if I did not obey. Whipping is healthy if soundly as well as affectionately administered. All this talk about corporal punishment bruising a child's spirit is maudlin sentimentality and invertebrate balderash. For every child that is harmed by being over-whipped I venture to say that there are ninety-nine injured by being under-whipped. If I speak confidently and feelingly on this point it is because I know how much I owe personally to the fact of being brought up in a home where I was taught to appreciate the greatness of righteous authority, the vastness of its meaning, the advantage of submitting to it, and the serious risk of resisting it. No anarchist could ever have graduated from the home I was born, loved, and chastised in. Such experience makes me pity the children who know no discipline but that of caresses and sweetmeats, and makes me more than pity the parents who have neither the discernment in their mental constitution nor the iron in their moral constitution to perceive that nothing which a child can know or can win begins to take the place of sense of superior authority, and of the holy right of that authority to be respected, loved, and revered."[1]

The important matter is that the child shall be consciously controlled, trained, kept in the right path. Some children can be most effectually controlled by love, pure and simple; some by a mixture of love and the hand of authority; and others still by the ungloved hand of authority alone.

3. Common Diseases of the Will.—This section may be appropriately closed by calling attention to two common diseases of the will which ought to be guarded against in child training.

(1) *The Explosive Will.*—This is the type of character in which the impulses discharge imme-

[1] *Talks to Young Women*, pp. 83–85.

diately into action. There is no chance for deliberation or choice. It is not normal willing at all, it is a real disease. The person acts without regard to conscientious scruples or final results. The impulse arises, there is nothing to inhibit it, and it discharges in action. The defectively "impulsive" and "irritable" persons are of this sort.

In childhood impulse is naturally prevalent. Dr. T. S. Clouston says: "Take a child of six months, and there is absolutely no such brain power existent as mental inhibition; no desire or tendency is stopped by a mental act. At a year old the rudiments of the great faculty of self-control are clearly apparent in most children. They will resist the desire to seize the gas flame, they will not upset the milk jug, they will obey orders to sit still when they want to move about—all through a higher mental inhibition. But the power of self-control is a gradual development."[1] Impulse gradually gives place to deliberation.

Certain nervous disorders produce in persons of mature powers this same will disease. For instance, the person who is suffering from an exhaustion of nervous energy may be extremely irritable, whereas under normal conditions the opposite temper prevails. Likewise the person who has naturally a small amount of nervous

[1] *Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases*, p. 310.

energy is likely to be lacking in self-composure. The slightest provocation sets free the impulse of anger and there is nothing to check it. The drunkard likewise has, by his unnatural habits, produced an abnormal condition of his will. With most drunkards it is a sort of vertigo. The nerve centers have become a sluiceway in which the gates are unlocked by every passing suggestion of a bottle and a glass. They may possibly hate the taste of liquor, and perfectly foresee the after remorse, but the suggestion to drink is present, the gates fly open, and the impulse reaches out into the deed. This is the climax of the explosive will.

When the explosive will grows out of a physical disorder, such as natural nerve weakness or nerve exhaustion, training must begin with such a course of life as will strengthen and restore the nervous energies. It may be supplemented and completed with such precept and example as will lead to deliberation, the taking of time to think, the rejecting of the course of folly, and the following of that which is best.

When the explosive will is the result of knowing no better and having no better ideal, it is purely a defect in training. Many parents are themselves so lacking in deliberation, so explosive on the slightest provocation that by all the power of their example they are training their children toward lack of control. Then in many cases no pains are used in teaching the young child the value of thinking deliberately before acting. Proper example and teaching constitute the proper training here.

(2) *The Sluggish Will.*—Here the action does not properly follow the decision. There is an overdoing of deliberation. The person is continually halting between two opinions, living in indecision. Impulses come and go, good resolutions abound, there is clear view of that which is high and that which is low, of that which is right and that which is wrong, and yet the will is obstructed and motionless. The ideals which people hold of life and the desires which they have are not so far different as we sometimes imagine. Men do not differ so much in their feelings and conceptions of life. The notions of possibility and their ideals of life are not so far apart as might be argued from their differing fates. The hopeless failures, the sentimentalists, the schemers, the drunkards, the deadbeats, may excel in their ideals and desires, but their knowledge never comes to action; with full command of theory they never get their limp characters erect. They continue to count the cost and never rise and build. This is the sluggish will. It is certainly one of the most pitiable exhibition of human na-

ture. The dreaming sentimentalist, the know-all and do-nothing type of character, is about the most pitiable of all. Here, again, we may train to the better course by both precept and example. Even a child ought to have decision and executive force. In fact, decision and positiveness are natural characteristics of childhood. A proper training will culture, refine, and strengthen these natural tendencies, and bring them into harmony with well-recognized authority. To reach this end will require, first of all, intelligent study of the individual child's nature. The parent or teacher who spends time and breath in ranting against the "theorizers" will not have either time or ability to study the children of their own care. We must clearly diagnose the disease before we can prescribe for it. A little intelligent study will help both to the discovery of the disease and the proper remedy.

CHAPTER XI

THE HOME AS A RELIGIOUS TRAINING AGENCY

No other sphere of child environment is so influential as the home, and no other personalities tell so largely upon child character and destiny as the parents. Almost every chapter of this book has set forth in some measure the privilege and duty of the home as a training agency. In many places also the methods to be pursued in this work have been presented. Still a few important facts remain to be stated.

1. The Home is the Sole Agency in Religious Training During the Earliest Years. —This book on religious training believes in the power of the home. It sings the old refrain, "There's no place like home." It believes, with South, that "The first sure symptom of a mind in health is rest of heart and pleasure felt at home," and with Hare that "To Adam, Paradise was home; to the good among his descendants home is Paradise."

In the good providence of God the child spends his first two or three years in enforced hermitry in the home. The influences which touch the young life at this early and all-important stage are solely those exerted by the members of the family and such as they permit to enter the sacred precincts of home. Outside companionship and social influence have not yet become factors. Thus God has sacredly guarded the parental influence over the setting out of the young immortal on his endless journey.

Professor John Fiske, J. M. Baldwin, and others have called attention to the unusually long infancy of human kind. Other animals reach their maturity much quicker. This fact points to parental privilege and duty. The great Potter keeps the clay soft for a long time in order that much may be written thereon, and written to stay. God ordains that much shall be done for a child's religious career during this tender, pliable, home period.

About the first thing that can be done effectively for a child is to use wise methods to promote his bodily health. Herbert Spencer said very truly, "To be a nation of healthy animals is the first condition of national prosperity." Indeed for the individual to be a healthy animal is the first condition to success in any line. Religion and health, religion and nature in her best mood are very close kin. A child whose stomach is disordered through improper feeding, whose nerves are racked through the hustle and bustle of home life around it, whose strength is impoverished through wrong hygienic methods on the part of the parents, has little chance of being religious or anything else that is worthy. So anything which ministers to the healthy animal is in the line of religious training during this earliest period.

Then it is far more than ranting superstition to believe and teach that the parents by direct spiritual impression imprint their own feelings, thoughts, and habits upon the child mind long before he can reason logically or even retain in memory the particular facts of his experience. Horace Bushnell showed that the child takes in as much from the silent assumptions of his surroundings as from positive instruction. This taking-in process begins with life itself. It antedates by many months the time when oral instruction is possible. Emerson said, "I cannot hear what you say, what you are roars so in my ears." What we are is teaching without words, is impressing without teaching. Who doubts that the all-wise Father has so arranged our natures and life that in this tremendously important period of beginnings the avenue of religious awakening and training is open between the heart of the loving parent and that of the child? As the mother's smile awakens the slumbering smile of her babe so her devotion enkindles in his young heart the sense of God and the feeling of his worship.

Toward the close of this solely home period communication by word becomes possible; and at its earliest arisings simple instruction and command should lead the child into attitudes and habits of worship. Any long list of religious observances during this period in child life is apt to contain much that is merely perfunctory, but much more is possible than is usually supposed. The parents stand very largely in the place of deity to the very young child; love to them is the preparation to love God; to properly fear them is the basis for a proper reverence of the heavenly Father. The parent's heart is for a long time the child's only conscience. His fear of giving them pain by his action is the only remorse he feels. Gradually a higher object of love and fear and authority dawns upon the child heart and mind. The great art of the parents is to breathe into the child their own morality, religious spirit, and devotion to God. To do this they must be genuinely good themselves, and be filled with intelligent earnestness to properly impress and mold the young life intrusted to them.

The home is the sole training agency during a very important and impressionable age. We have it from the most sober science of our day, first, that religion is an instinct of the race; and, second, that an instinct neglected in its earliest days is either seriously crippled for life or killed outright. The conclusion from these principles is self-evident, and finds abundant confirmation in the religious conditions about us. Many reach the age of intelligent choice religious cripples, and others dead indeed. This state of things is largely the result of parental carelessness during the early period when nothing is thought to be possible, but everything combines in telling us that this stage of life is most impressionable, most important, and most neglected.

2. The Home in Cooperation with Other Training Agencies.—The following quotation from Bishop J. H. Vincent states clearly the necessity of cooperation between the different agencies of training, together with a plan for attaining it. I quote from a leaflet, prepared to aid in Sunday school work, entitled "To the Parents of Our Pupils:" "(1) We, the pastor, superintendent, and teachers of the Sunday school to which your children belong, send you a few words of greeting in the name of the great Teacher. (2) The design of the Sunday school is twofold: (*a*) to make plain to our pupils the truths taught in the Holy Scriptures; and (*b*) to lead them to love and obey

the Lord Jesus Christ, who is set forth in those Scriptures. (3) It is exceedingly difficult for us to succeed in this without the help of your parental authority and influence. Your opinions, teachings, and example have immense power with your children. A child will for a long time believe what his father believes, and love what his mother loves, in spite of all that the school, the church, and the world may teach. (4) It is not strange, therefore, that we greatly desire to secure your cooperation in our work, and it is the object of this missive to show you what you may do to aid us. . . . (5) The following are the requests which we make: (*a*) Show, as far as you are able, an appreciation of our work. Let the children see that you have faith in the school and its objects. A word in our favor may beget in the child strong faith in us, and thus will give force to our teachings. (*b*) If you are not acquainted with the school or with our method, or if from any cause you have doubts concerning us, or even slight prejudices against us, we respectfully ask you not to give expression to such doubts or prejudices before your children. Write to us. Visit and remonstrate with us. . . . (*c*) See that your children feel the claims of the school upon them. . . . (*d*) Send them regularly and punctually."[1]

[1] *Modern Sunday School*, pp. 29, 30.

The Sunday school, Junior society, or other Church agency is very much hindered in its efforts at religious training if it have not the earnest, intelligent cooperation of the home. This cooperation is the key to a greater success than has ever been won in either home or church. We may have orchestra, fine singing, and other drawing cards, and may fill the seats in our Junior rooms, but unless we reach the fathers and mothers, and bring them into holy alliance with us, our work will continue to be only partially successful in any case, and in the majority sadly disappointing. O, if parents could be made to feel their responsibility, and exercise their authority, and exert their influence for the genuine religious culture of the children at home, the work of saving the race would be more than half done. The rest would be easily and quickly done by the church and home working together in the church service. The greatest work of the church is to reach and save the parents; save them until they will enter honestly, intelligently, earnestly, and prayerfully into the work of saving and training the children. The truly religious home will fill the Sunday school, make the Junior society a delight, and crowd the church with devout worshipers. Let the pulpit set forth in unmistakable language parental responsibility and privilege, and become in fact a great teaching agēncy in this line. Let the Sunday school and Junior society seek by every possible means to come into closer touch with the home life of the children, and to enlist more and more the cooperation of the parents. Let pastors, teachers, and parents study the best books that are written on the religious life of children and kindred topics; let them become really intelligent concerning human nature in general and child nature in particular; let them see duty, privilege, and method—and we will have a revolution in the work of saving the world.

One thing we need to guard against is the assumption that all responsibility rests on the mother. There is no more powerful influence than that of the mother. There is no sweeter word in human speech than "mother." But what is the matter with "father"? The heavenly Parent, who gives himself perpetually to the religious nurture of his children, reveals himself as Father. This work, then, cannot be unbecoming to fatherhood. Mother's power is fully doubled when it is backed by an equally earnest and continuous effort by father. "Mothers' meetings" are frequently held, and are very useful, but the greater need is for "Fathers' meetings." Rather let us have "Parents' meetings," and in them seek for the best light from earth and heaven upon the duty and privilege of father and mother in the religious training of their children.

3. The Duty and Privilege of the Home is Nontransferable.—In these days of Sunday schools, Junior societies, and numerous other Church agencies for the religious help of children, there is a temptation to unthinking parents to attempt to resign their position, so far as the religious training of their children is concerned, in favor of the Church societies. Rev. A. T. Scott, in a recent number of the *Christian Companion,* gives this suggestive incident, under the heading, "I Send Him to Sunday School:" "Visiting with a pastor some time ago we found a mother who seemed to be thinking seriously of becoming a Christian. A bright boy, of perhaps some six summers, was present—the only child. In the course of the conversation a remark in, I think, the exact words at the head of this article, fell from the mother's lips. They were uttered with joyous earnestness. Her mother heart was anxious for her boy to be taught the things of God. I doubt not she sincerely hopes he will become a Christian boy. And yet she did not seem to realize that, by not herself being a follower of Christ, she was putting, perhaps, the greatest possible hindrance in the way of her child."

The above is a sample of the attempts so often made to transfer to the Church parental duty as it touches the religious training of the child. But all such attempts fail, for the reason that God has so conditioned human life that this duty is non-transferable.

A famous teacher has recently sounded a note of warning on this matter. He says that the average father in our country delegates to others nearly everything which has to do with the education and training of his children. He delegates to the mother the care of the home and its social life. He delegates to the school the unfolding of the intellectual life. He delegates to the Church the care of the religious life. He reserves for himself the finance department. How much harm is done to child, and parent, and home, and Church, by such delegation no one can adequately state. God made the home to be the first school and the first church, and gave to father and mother a duty, and a privilege, which they cannot transfer to another.

4. The Sad Failure of the Average Home in Religious Training.—The home fails in many ways, but in none is its failure so universal, so complete, and so disastrous, as in the religious training of the children. There seems to many thoughtful minds to be less spirituality and less moral religious training in the home than there was a generation ago.

Professor J. A. Faulkner, certainly not a pessimist, wrote an article, on "The Training of John Wesley," in which he says: "The world is losing a great deal in the decay of home life. I do not believe the training of the home is valued as much as it used to be. The children are brought up in the streets, or are left to grow up to turn out the best they can. Or even where care is taken for the training of the children, that work is put into the hands of the public school or Sunday school teachers. This ought not to be so. The mother and father should be the teachers of their children, their guides, their counselors, their helpers. From such homes come the lights of the world; the Luthers, the Wesleys, the Edwardses, and the Washingtons. Our modern civilization with its glare, its craving for publicity, its quest for honors, is inclined to offer the home on the altar of its unholy ambitions. We cannot be content with its sweet quiet, and its uneventful life; we must run hither and thither to our conventions and committees, we must seek the offices of Church and State. Alas for us that we cannot see that the highest honor is the crown of motherhood, the grandest work is training an immortal life for this world and the next, the largest liberty is accepting the service of Him who was meek and lowly in spirit, and the place of greatest opportunity, of richest rewards, the place which gives scope to the finest talents, the most consecrated zeal, the deepest piety, and the truest wisdom, is bounded by the four walls of our own home."[1]

Many homes seem to find time enough for everything but family prayer. Others are so busy in keeping up with the rush of the world that they find time for no religious duties. In contrast with such homes how beautiful that in which God occupies the chief place, in which religion enters into every atom of the life and fills all the atmosphere of the house. Periodic family devotions, once or twice a day, are only a small part of the religious life of such a home. Blossoms and fruit are not the sum and substance of the tree's life, but only periodic manifestations of the life current within. So the family altar is only the periodic manifestation of the abiding current of religious life in the home. We want a home religion that enters into every rule, arrangement, and fiber of family life; a religion that shall be as natural as eating and sleeping; a religion that shall brighten and sweeten every atom of family existence. Such a religion does not appeal to the child as a luxury added to life, but as an ingrained fiber of all true and natural life. Such religion will get into the child's being so early, and so thoroughly, that the

[1] *Conference Examiner*, May-June, 1899, pp. 185, 186.

child will be in no more danger of losing it than he is of losing his backbone. A religion taken on, or ingrafted, after years of godless life will lack this ingrained quality. The lack in the religious life of our day, the cause of its instability and unnaturalness, is in the failure of the home during this early period of life.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGIOUS TRAINING AND SOCIAL LIFE

At about four or five years of age the child's social instincts reach the stage of development where he naturally seeks, and is greatly helped by, companionship with those near his own age. He will be happier so than if taught and trained alone. The association with others gives a needed field for the practical application of the principles which may and ought to be taught at the beginning of this period. The Golden Rule and other fundamental and at the same time simple truths ought to be instilled into the child mind at this early stage. Then companionship with others of equal age works these principles into the moral fibers of the growing life. Where does the child get this field for social culture?

1. The embryonic stage of the child's social life is in the home, with the other members of the family. This is particularly helpful if there are other children in the family. The child study of our day has tabulated some facts which do not speak very well of the social culture of the "only child." Some elements of great moral and re-

ligious value seem lacking in such cases. Thoughtfulness of the welfare of others, justice to our fellows, sacrifice for those who may need our help, are not predominant virtues, as a rule, in the "only child." This is predominantly true before the only child has gone out of the home into a wider association with other children. During this early social stage the surroundings and influences that mold the social life of the child are in a very absolute way under parental control. It is a period for great care and intelligent providing.

2. From the home the child emerges at four or five years of age into a wider field of companionship with playmates of his own choosing, at least he will have his own preferences, and parental skill will be taxed to control this larger companionship in harmony with the child's best interests. It is quite useless, foolish, and disastrous for the parent to attempt to keep the child from companionship with other children outside the home. He follows race instinct when he unlocks the barred gate and seeks his fellows. The art here is not to forbid companionship, but to control it; keep out the unclean, depraved, irreverent, irreligious, as you would a poisonous reptile. Dr. William Barrows has well said: "Any pastor who has noticed how much a lamb frolics just for the

fun of it must consider the lambs of his flock as belonging also to the animal kingdom, having like propensities, and quite as reasonable and innocent. Indeed, they are constitutional necessities, and a wise provision should be made for them. The plays as well as the prayers of children are worthy of careful parental attention, and a system of persistent negatives on juvenile indulgences will never furnish the recreation that childhood needs and age can approbate. Great care is needed, therefore, lest one hinder a healthy moral and religious development. Juvenile piety, if well started and proportioned, will not hush the shouting of a boy, or slacken his running, or shorten his kite string. Little Samuel, even at Shiloh, must have had some childish sports outside the Tabernacle. Many an adult Samuel, as well as Hannah and Elkanah, passing for sedate and devoted church members, are pleased with a span, and a lawn, and brilliant table service, which are only the adult kite, and top, and oar. Possibly some fatherly and motherly attention in the line of juvenile employments would have saved Hophni and Phinehas. With no unjust reflection on any Eli, ancient or modern, it might be suggested that, if good men would tremble more for the necessary and suitable recreation of their little ones, they would have less cause in old age to tremble for the Ark of God."[1]

3. The Sunday school, the Junior society, and the public services of the Church furnish a field necessary to the child's social training. The child is a social being, and God ordains that the social instinct should minister to the cultivation of the religious nature. Hence the child is sent to these social religious meetings for something which he cannot gain so well, if at all, anywhere else. That something is religious impression and expression in a larger social community than is furnished by the home. Here he finds a broad field for the culture of the fellowship element of his religious life. The young saints need and enjoy fellowship as well as their elders. Then these services furnish a large field for religious activity. No natural impulse of the child is more pronounced than that which leads toward constant activity. All normal little children are active. Activity is nature's way of securing physical development. A seemingly superfluous amount of nervous energy is generated in the growing child. A certain amount is needed in the natural life processes, and then a large amount seems to be left for running, jumping, kicking, and squirming. We have come to see that the quickest way to reach, edu-

[1] *The Church and Her Children.*

cate, and save the child is not by repression of his activities, but by properly guiding and controlling them; in other words, by directing along proper lines the natural nervous energies and consequent activities.

"No thought or feeling without appropriate activity" will one day be the watchword of all religious training. Home, Sunday school, Junior society, public worship, all will be transformed by this vital principle. The worship of the family altar will be so planned that the child will no longer expend his energy in a vain attempt to "keep quiet," and in squirming, while the head of the house performs the devotions. But he will take active part in family worship. The Sunday school will have more motion in it, and less of humdrum teaching. Worship in church will be so arranged as to fit the active element of child nature. As things are to-day we have this anomaly: Nature speaking through the child says, "Act; keep in motion;" the religious pedagogue growls, "Keep still there." Activity is not only the natural thing for the child, but it is the necessary thing to work in instruction until it is a part of the moral and religious fiber of his being.

4. The social life is of particular importance in religious training from the beginning of adolescence on. Part of the storm and stress of adoles-

cence arises from the sudden ripening of the social powers. The physical and intellectual changes taking place at puberty put the youth into a new social world. The reproductive powers reach maturity, and are capable of being excited to lust and great evil by wrong associations. Parents owe the children such a full, practical knowledge of these things as will enable them to fully understand the temptations which may come to them, the evils that follow wrongdoing, and the beauty and joy of remaining pure and virtuous. Get the child to hate sexual impurity and to look upon conversation about it as low and degrading. This may be done by wise precept and personal example. Such impartation of knowledge and cultivation of pure taste must be supplemented by pure, wholesome, happy social life. Let the young boys be much with the young girls in pleasant, wholesome, social companionship. A repressed social instinct most frequently breaks out in sexual impropriety.

Attempt at suppressing the social instinct is calamitous. Kept from natural, proper expression, it walks in the ways of evil. When a thoughtful child was asked one day why a certain tree in the garden was so crooked, he responded, "I s'pose somebody must have stepped on it when it was little." Not trees alone are bent, twisted, and dwarfed in their growth because they are tramped on when they are little. Many a distorted human life attests the truth of the child's saying. Tramping on does not pay. Instead of tramping on the child's social nature make proper and large provision for it, and it will not then seek expression in social crookedness or sexual sin.

Professor William James stops in his great work on psychology to make this practical observation: "No one need be told how dependent all human social elevation is upon the prevalence of chastity. Hardly any factor measures more than this the difference between civilization and barbarism. Physiologically interpreted, chastity means nothing more than the fact that present solicitations of sense are overpowered by suggestions of æsthetic and moral fitness which the circumstances awaken in the cerebrum; and that upon the prohibitory or permissive influence of these alone action directly depends."[1] Thus by the deepest principles of psychology, resting back upon the very construction of the physical brain, we are taught that the safety of the adolescent in the control of sexual emotion lies in the possession of the intelligent, sober, pure, moral principles, and ideals touching these matters, fortified

[1] *Elements of Psychology*, vol. 1, p. 22.

by pure social habits of thought and life formed by association with the pure.

We cannot easily overstate the value of giving the social powers of our youth "time, place, and opportunity" for a full, positive, healthy growth. The best way to keep away the dark is to steadily maintain the incoming of the stream of light. Life keeps away death by no hand-to-hand conflict, but by the continual flow of its own vital stream. The river Yukon is said to have such a swift-flowing current that it forces its stream of fresh water two miles into the bosom of the ocean. There is not great danger of the ocean flowing back into that river and salting it. Its own current is too full and strong. The surest protection against the tide of social perversion and wickedness which seeks to engulf our children is to cultivate in them a pure, strong tide of social life that shall maintain its own way and tend to purify the evil tides that come near it. The wise parent spends time, thought, prayer, and money on the social culture of the child. The wide-awake church, likewise, looks after and provides for the social life of its children and young people—and of all its people, in fact. It does not consider its work done when it arranges a few set "socials," with strange names, but seeks to culture all its people in real sociability; it attempts to lift high the social standard and ideal until they really enjoy the pure, the wholesome, the healthy, the religious.

Very many of our young people are first led away from the church and its services through false social notions. These often arise very early, especially in boys. They take up street notions of enjoyment. Braggadocia, swagger, balderash, and ruffianism generally become the ideals of the boy who is allowed to run at liberty for his social pleasure. The home then becomes a very uninteresting place, father and mother old fogies, school a bother, and the church unbearably slow. Religious poison thus creeps in through the social life, and that which might have been a "savor of life" becomes a "savor of death."

CHAPTER XIII

CHURCH TRAINING AND ITS METHODS

We have almost a surfeit of "practical plans" for work among children in church organizations. Many of them are the result of zeal without knowledge, while others are most helpful. I need not add another to the long list of monographs on how to conduct a children's meeting, or how to teach the Catechism, the Lord's Prayer, the Books of the Bible, or Bible history. I only allot space here to present a few general principles which lie at the basis of the real work of the Church in the salvation and training of her children.

1. The Goal is the Personal Religious Awakening and Development of the Child.—Teaching must be subordinated to training. We have very many "prodigals" who are thoroughly instructed in all religious truth. The Church has been too largely content with thorough teaching. The heart has gone largely untouched and the religious nature unawakened. As a consequence the irreligious being has walked out of church, at about fifteen years of age, knowing much, but doing and being nothing religious.

This is a serious charge, but is it not sadly true? To remedy this state of things calls for a remodeling of the Sunday school and the Junior society until they are in greater measure not simply teaching agencies but intelligent training agencies for the culture of the devout worshipful spirit, the religious feelings, the religious habits, the religious activities, and all that goes to make up a real Christian life. Any intelligent church worker by a little study and prayer will be quickly led from one plan to another for the actual accomplishment of these ends.

I have recently attended the services of two Junior Epworth Leagues. The first was splendidly organized, had a large number of boys and girls present, and did good singing, and better teaching work; but the only worshipful thing during the whole service was the repetition of the Lord's Prayer, and that lost much of its worshipfulness because of the hurry and bustle which characterized it. In the second League I found a different atmosphere—it was reverent and worshipful from beginning to end. But little time was given to teaching and much to different exercises of worship. The service began with silent prayer, lasting about thirty seconds: long enough, and it was real *silent* prayer. The superintendent had contributed much to the heartiness of this part of the worship by the remarks which he made before it began. He reminded them that they were about to talk with God, that he was not far away, but was present to hear each prayer. He said, "Let us kneel, as Methodists ought to do; let us close our eyes so that we may see God only. Let us fold our hands 'so,' lest we should be tempted to use them in some other way during the prayer." Then followed this hearty season of silent prayer. Then there were short hearty prayers by some of the older Juniors. There was a short service of testimony, in which several of the boys and girls bore testimony to their love of Christ and their joy in his service. How different this from the bustling and whispering and irreverence of the average children's service. A few services of this sort make worship a different thing to every child; the springs of religious devotion are touched, reverence is cultivated, and the child enters upon a new career. These are only a few of many devices for making our children's services contribute to religiousness, and not to irreverence and irreligion.

The work of the church is not complete until the child has become a happy Christian and an established member of the church. It is not intended here to teach that the church should seek to lead children of tender age to profess conversion before that experience is personally possible or necessary to them; nor to become members of the church on profession of faith before they know what their vows mean. There is much preliminary to these important steps, much that is necessary to their proper taking at a later day. If the preliminary training is properly done the child inevitably turns to these at the proper time. There is, however, no year in the child's life when our work for his religious growth is a success unless he is actually advancing in religious devotion, feeling, and life. Most children are conscious wanderers from God at ten or twelve years of age. This ought not so to be. We must learn to reach, awaken, and develop the religious germ. Without this, what does all our teaching amount to?

2. WE MUST MAKE OUR CHURCH WORK INDIVIDUAL.—This is confessedly difficult, much more difficult in church than in home training because of the larger number to deal with and the short time in which to do it. The Sunday school seeks to reach the individual line of work through its division into classes. The teacher is supposed to come into personal contact with each scholar, to know something of the family life and the personal traits in each case. This part of the work is too largely neglected. The average teacher considers his work well done when, through the helps at

hand, the lesson has been well prepared for intelligent teaching, the scholars met, the questions asked and answered. The average class in the Sunday school is too large. There is more work to be done to make real success than the average teacher can attend to.

Then in our Junior societies, such as the Junior Epworth League, the Junior Christian Endeavor, etc., a step toward individual work can be taken by proper grading. In many such societies the "First or Primary" grade includes children from four to eight years of age; the "Second or Middle" grade from eight to twelve, and the "Third or Senior" grade from twelve to sixteen. In very large societies these grades ought to be subdivided into classes. Each grade or class must have a superintendent or teacher. For the more devotional parts of the service, usually arranged for the opening and closing, the Juniors may take part in a body, while during the teaching and more active parts of the work they are separated into grades or classes.

Then all successful church workers must meet, learn, and help the children outside of the few moments they spend with them each week in the church service. The church worker should visit the child's home and have the child visit his. Such frequent commingling will give the needed knowledge for intelligent training. The great differences in children make such knowledge a prime necessity. Nora A. Smith has well said: "It is only another proof of the infinite scope of the divine plan that such countless myriads of human beings can be born into the world, all built on the same general lines, and yet differing so widely one from another as to need for their best development climates and training as dissimilar as do the polar bear and the bird of paradise. Whether this be due to heredity, to prenatal influences, or to the old, old theory of the transmigration of souls, the facts are there as solid as the hills themselves. We cannot devise a plan of education suited to the normal child, and then wind up our own little one and 'fix him' as Richter says, exactly as if he were an astronomical hundred-year chronometer, warranted to show the hours and positions of the planets quite accurately long after our death. We cannot do this, for probably he is not a normal child. It is our highest business in life to find out his personal equation as far as we may: that is, to discover how near he comes to the standard in one direction, how far he overlaps it in another, whether he needs free rein here, curbing there, encouragement in one line, or reproof in another. True parents and teachers have always known this to be necessary, but knowing one's duty is not synonymous with performing it, on this planet at any rate."[1]

We have been depending too largely upon our congregational efforts with children. These have their place, in fact, a very important place, but we must learn to do more and more personal, individual work. The ideal parent will train the family as individuals, and the church will save the children by going after them personally. Not time enough? The larger part of the church members of to-day are standing in the market place with the mistaken cry, "No man hath hired us," while here is work for all the unemployed.

3. THE CHURCH MUST REACH AND ELEVATE THE HOME.—Bishop Vincent says: "The home gives the keynote in all matters outside of its circle. Life is to childhood and youth what the teachings of home make it. The interpretation of business, of society, of politics, of education, of religion, is the work of father and mother; not necessary in specific teaching, in formal definitions, in purposed emphasis; but in the spirit that dominates the home life, in the remarks, incidental references and habitual policies which find place there. Religion and the Church, the Sabbath and the Bible, are realities, facts of our civilization. How do these realities appear to the child in the casual

[1] *The Children of the Future*, pp. 2–4.

and everyday references to them at home? What is the attitude of the home toward these great facts? Is it an attitude of indifference, of frivolity, of contempt, of antagonism? Are matters of Church life always spoken of wisely, reverently, kindly? Is contempt for such things at once in that household reproved? According to the ruling idea will be the method and spirit of domestic administration. The religious spirit of the home determines the spirit and conduct of children in church and Sunday school."[1]

We will at once recognize the truth of this teaching, and the necessary conclusion that any advanced religious training of the children must carry with it the elevation of the home. The most devoted church cannot hope to make a religious impression on the child so deep, by one hour's effort each week, that an indifferent, wicked, irreligious home cannot efface it by its influence during all the remaining hours of the week. Father, mother, the home must be reached; but how? Well, in some cases the child brought into fellowship with Christ will prove to be the leaven to leaven the whole lump. There is a fable of a humble woman who found on her table one day a fair lily in a beautiful crystal vase. She was in rapture over the purity of the lily and the

[1] Article in *Sunday School Journal*, October, 1900, p. 599.

beauty of the cup. She had not been so charmed lately, for life had been very discouraging. Suddenly she thought how much more beautiful the lily would be if the dusty window were clean! She cleaned it. Soon the extra light revealed the unkept condition of her room generally. It, too, must be cleaned. Then the walls begged for attention, and soon the whole house was transformed through the influence of one lily. One child saturated with the sweetness of Christ's love may transform a whole household.

Then the pulpit may reach many parents, make them feel the responsibility for the religious training of their children, and give them many suggestions as to how they may best discharge this responsibility. What better work than this can the pulpit do? Let the preacher not be afraid of theorizing. Most of the homes have neither theory nor practice in this matter, except it be evil practice. Then let the Sunday school or the Junior society secure the best books on child training and, either through the church library or through their own personal effort, secure their circulation among those parents where they are most needed. It has been the thought and prayer of the writer that the present volume should be valuable for such a mission.

The majority of parents need a great deal of instruction before they will be wise in the religious training of their children. We cannot trust entirely to "instinct" in this matter, be it ever so strong and pure. The instinct may be trusted so far as loving and protecting the child is concerned, but when it comes to the proper methods of manifesting that love and desire to protect there is need for education. Especially in the matter of religious training, "blind reason" ought to be educated into clear insight. We have talked a great deal about bringing up a child in the way he should go. We are now beginning to see the need of a preliminary work: we must bring up a parent in the way he should go, and the other will follow as a natural consequence. We need in our school work, in our current literature, in our church work, and in educational fields generally more of that which will prepare for parenthood. About thirty years ago Herbert Spencer, in his volume on *Education,* remarked that the training of that day, both in home and school, seemed best fitted for a race of celibates, and predicted that the philosopher of the future, pondering on the school records of that time, would marvel at the absence of much that would prepare the students for the future duties and responsibilities of parenthood. There is still a great lack in this direction. There is an especial lack of that which would prepare parents for the religious training of their offspring. Perhaps it may be said that this sort of training is the business of the Church. If done at all it must be done under inspiration and help of the Church. Let the Church shoulder her responsibility.

Something may be done in "parents' meetings," wisely conducted. Make them real schools of methods. Inspire the parents to read up and study up on the subject. Do not simply pray for the parents, but instruct them. Do not be afraid to theorize, or to strike off high ideals. What an aid to the Sunday school is a well-attended parents' meeting where the best teaching concerning religious training is supplemented by free interchange of experience, and the whole made effective by much earnest prayer. I suggest an occasional "Parents' Day" in the Sunday school and in the Junior society. At this meeting seek to have all the parents of the children present. Let the parents see the work you are doing, and thus gain their intelligent cooperation and sympathy.

Then the fault is not all on the parents' side. Maybe the Sunday school teacher, the Junior superintendent, or even the pastor, has too largely neglected the duty of personal visits to the home. Or, perhaps, if the visits have been made, no definite helpful work has been done toward better methods of religious training. This is a delicate duty, and yet in the majority of cases a wise person may do it helpfully. We must reach and save the home. A child saved and then thrust into an unsaved home has but few chances. We must labor and pray until our homes are saved. They are the key of the kingdom. When the home and the church are in holy cooperation the child has but few chances to go wrong.

4. Church Training Must Make Larger Provision for the Religious Activity of the Child.—As previously noted, no tendency is more pronounced in child nature than that which prompts to activity. Friedrich Froebel gave the keynote of the kindergarten, announced the principle which is slowly transforming the educational world, and gave the key which will yet unlock the problems of religious training, when he recognized self-activity as the condition of self-development. Educators had previously attached value to manual exercise and handicraft of various kinds, but looked upon them simply as parts of physical training and as preparation to earn a living. With Froebel outward physical training always had an inward psychical correlative; some mental faculty was being developed at the same time that the body was being cultured and

strengthened. The result is not simply a better workman but a more complete human being, trained by self-activity.

The manual training movement, now becoming so prevalent, and the kindergarten are organized responses to this principle, made by the educational world. The religious sphere is the last to be entered by this savor of life. However, the leaven is beginning to enter this most conservative of all realms. The kernel of the young people's movement, so prevalent in all the churches for the last twenty years, is found in the desire to provide spheres of activity for the naturally active element of the Church. This is the explanation of its phenomenal success already achieved, and its future will be increasingly glorious as it provides more intelligently and largely for this religious activity. Its work is only fairly begun. An immense amount of tact, study, and planning is necessary before the goal will be reached.

This principle of self-activity must be extended to every sphere of religious training. The gospel of work must be more fully preached and practiced in our work among adults. Not enough sermons are preached on the Master's words: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them,"[1]

[1] John xiii, 17.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,"[1] and, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."[2] Lowell said, "It is not the finding of a thing, but the making something of it after it is found that is of consequence." To know all the teachings of Christianity avails nothing unless they are made active, character-building forces in our lives. The alchemy which dissolves religious knowledge into religious life and character is activity. We need both to "work in" and "work out" our religion.

The principle of activity needs special application in our work among children. The special need arises from the fact of special neglect in this sphere, and also because it is so well adapted to child nature. Dr. F. E. Clark and Bishop J. H. Vincent, in the early days of the young people's movement, aroused the Church to see as never before that young people need the culture of religious activity and that the Church needs the enthusiasm and thrill which come from such activity. It is time that we are extending this principle more largely to the children of the Church. What can the child do that is religious? Much, in many ways.

[1] John xv, 14. [2] Matt. vii, 21.

In our treatment of "The Home as a Training Agency" we noted the necessity of providing for greater religious activity. In all Church work among children the same necessity exists. We must seek more and more to so plan the services of the Sunday school and the Junior society that the children shall have the culture that arises from self-activity. We have been feeding the lambs too exclusively from what Shakespeare calls "the alms-basket of words." We have been too often guilty of the folly of driving out the devil of evil practice from our children, then sweeping and garnishing the house, but leaving it empty. The natural result has been that seven other demons have come and dwelt therein.

We must study and study, and plan and plan, for helpful religious activities for the children. Singing, and reading the lesson, and taking part in the other devotional exercises of the Sunday school and Junior society furnish a large field for religious activity. Here we must plan to give the children larger part. Here these agencies have a work of far more importance than the teaching of the books of the Bible. Then the child, even in tender years, ought to be trained to take reverent part in the regular public worship of the church. He can at an early age take part in the hymns, the responsive reading of the psalm, in the creed and the Lord's Prayer. He can be encouraged to find the preacher's text and commit it to memory. He can by a little effort be induced to fix in mind some of the chief thoughts of the sermon. Nothing can take the place of such a church training in religious activity.

Then the child may be trained to activity along lines of humanity and benevolence. A child naturally loves to "help." Mothers know this well, for they have been almost "tired" by the persistent offers of help from this section of the family. At three or four years of age the child steps into the wide world and becomes part and parcel of a wider circle than the home. He instinctively feels that he wants to be a helper, and that those about him need his help. The Church may provide for this instinct to its great advantage and that of the child. One Junior Epworth League reports a sewing circle where boys as well as girls take part in making some garments, and mending others, for poor children. In another League the Juniors accompanied the pastor on visits to the children who were sick in the community. Another visited the aged "shut-ins" and sang for them their happy songs. Another encouraged its members to bring flowers to their Saturday meeting, where they were made into large bouquets for the church service of the Sabbath. Others encourage the children individually to carry bouquets to the sick. Others enlist the children in caring for and providing for the education of a child in one of our mission fields. One Junior League, hearing of a poor little cripple in their community, made a beautiful scrapbook for him. On an appointed evening all who contributed an article to it came together and under guidance of the superintendent the pasting was done and the completed book carried to the grateful child. Another League had a "Nature Study Day." They met in a small grove, then strolled to the river near by. They looked at cloud, sky, tree, flower, grass, waves, birds, and fishes; all were encouraged to see God in everything.

5. Method and Child Conversion.—Our study of "child conversion" in a previous chapter led us to some very important practical conclusions: First, that conversion in its full meaning cannot take place until the time of full moral responsibility. This arises, with the maturity of the reason and the will, at the beginning of the adolescent period—or from ten to twelve years of age. Second, that previous to this period the child is in a saved state. That is, the unconditional benefits of Christ's atonement so fully counteract hereditary depravity that if the child dies he is a fit subject for heaven, and, if he lives, proper

training and environment will naturally and easily lead him to love, serve, and trust God—be a Christian. Regeneration, in the sense of a conscious personal choice, will at the proper age be one of the natural and therefore easy steps in the life of such a child. Third, that the child during the period preceding full moral choice will, under wrong training and environment, permit the grace of Christ vouchsafed to him in infancy to filter away and be lost. Such a child will reach the period of full moral choice perverse and irreligious. No personal condemnation rests upon the child, for he is not yet responsible for himself. The blame rests upon the neglectful parent. Fourth, we found a very decided natural change in the religious career of the child arising with the "intelligent period," at about three or four years of age. This change is so marked that it might in a very limited sense be called a conversion, though we prefer not to use that term. Fifth, we have seen that it is consistent with both nature and revelation that a real though gradual change should take place in the religious nature, a practical conversion, before the years of full moral responsibility. This is accomplished through the grace of God and good, wise, religious training. Sixth, we found that the period of adolescence is the harvest time for conversion.

An extremely large percentage of the members in all the churches have made their choice of Christ and his service between ten and sixteen years of age.

From the above facts we naturally conclude, first, that conversion as a personal, conscious, definite change should not be sought much, if any, before ten years of age, and as early as ten in very rare cases. The child's powers of will, reason, and moral choice are not ready for such an experience earlier. Dr. G. Stanley Hall says: "Change of heart before pubescent years, there are several scientific reasons for thinking, is, as some now say, the most disastrous of all precocities and forcings. Revival sermons which the writer has heard delivered to young children are analogous to exhorting them to imagine themselves married people and inculcating the duties of that relation. Some one has said of very early risers that they are apt to be conceited during the forenoon and dull and stupid for the rest of the day. So precocious, infant Christians are apt to be conceited and full of pious affectation all the forenoon of life, and thereafter dull and commonplace."[1]

Broad investigation into actual cases leads to the conclusion that, even where the child seeks

[1] *Pedagogical Seminary*, 1891, p. 208.

and professes to be converted before the adolescent period, he is not saved from passing through a great crisis when this period actually arrives. After strife and storm he has to choose Christ anew and settle down to serve him. The child who has been properly trained and kept in the love of God, but has not professed conversion, passes through no greater change in reaching the same place in the religious life. These are not theories but facts, and they show that preadolescent conversion often amounts to naught, and may even become a stumbling-block.

Let nothing in the quotation from Dr. Hall, nor in anything I have said against conversion before adolescence, be interpreted as teaching that religious training before adolescence is also useless. The contrary is true. The missing link in the child's religious training is in the neglect of the early period. A forced conversion is no part of that training. Rather the proper training during the early periods accomplishes a virtual conversion, and makes the choice of Christ a natural and easy thing when the fullness of time arrives.

We conclude, secondly, that during the adolescent period we should earnestly seek to lead and help the child who is struggling toward the great experience of conversion. Even if the child has been properly trained up to this period, there will now naturally arise, with the flood of new powers and experiences that come to the adolescent, many religious questionings, fears, anxieties, and doubts. There will be a searching of the whole ground. The most sacred things will be put to test. Be steady, patient, kind, open, fair, earnest, and prayerful, and the young soul will gladly receive your help and settle down in an honest, full, voluntary choice of Christ and his service for life. This is the time when parents, Sunday school teachers, Junior superintendents, and pastors can reap golden harvests by means of private, personal, businesslike interviews with the adolescent boys and girls. It is a difficult task, especially with those who have strayed from Christ. Much will depend on the spirit with which you go at this work. In the case of those who have wandered from God, bring the matter to a conclusion by asking them to take some step that will commit them to the Lord's side. It may be the altar of prayer, the inquiry room, or uniting with the church; but in each case the honest soul, properly instructed, knows that the step taken means surrender to Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Bishop J. H. Vincent says: "Let us be wise with our very highest wisdom in this direction, Remembering that the conversion of the little one is the work of the Spirit, let us seek the Spirit. Remembering that the Spirit operates through the truth, let us teach the truth. We must, first, distinguish between a transitory emotion easily traceable to circumstances, and the deeper and often less demonstrative work of the Spirit of God. Second, guard against unwise public methods of 'seeking religion.' We believe that children should publicly profess Christ, but we are painfully aware that the very measures often adopted to secure this end are more likely to develop pride and morbid self-consciousness than piety and humility. . . . Third, take good care of the little disciples after the first profession. Teach them, bear with them, . . . remember that they are children. . . . Never try to take the 'boy' out of a boy to make him a Christian. . . . Store his mind with Gospel facts, and maxims, and promises. Teach him to pray daily, to love the Lord as he loves his mother, to be true always and everywhere, to avoid all pretenses, and to represent the power of Christian faith at home, on the playground, at school, or in the street."[1]

6. The Child and Church Membership.—The conclusions already reached in reference to the spiritual condition of children make the question of

[1] *Modern Sunday School*, pp. 22, 23.

their proper relation to the Church easy of solution. Before the age of full personal responsibility the child is in a saved state, and as such is entitled to membership in the Church of Christ. The Methodist Episcopal Church makes provision for them as probationary members. This exactly meets the case. Its book of Discipline directs that all baptized children shall be gathered into classes. Their enrollment in the class is equivalent to reception as probationary members of the Church. If at proper age they continue to manifest their love for Christ and his service, and take the vows required of those becoming full members, they may be received at once into that relation. We know of no better provision than this. During the time of irresponsibility they are in relation to the church as members, and at the arrival of the age when full moral choice and obligation are possible they are asked to publicly vow their allegiance to Christ. If practically carried out it would be the means of bringing untold thousands into the Church. In most cases it is unfortunately a dead letter. We practically fail to recognize the fact that children are entitled to be members of the Church. We fail to see our privilege in thus keeping them near to Christ and his Church. We think that the best that can be done is to let them wander away in their sins for a season, and then bring them back tragically to the fold. Alas, many of them never get back, and those who do are the worse for their wandering.

Dr. Lucien Clark has said: "The Bible does not teach, as some theologians maintain, that all children are unregenerated sinners, occupying the same footing in relation to the kingdom of God as unenlightened heathen, requiring the same kind of conversion in order that they may be brought in. This doctrine has done a deal of mischief in the world. The spread of Christianity has been greatly hindered by it. Christian parents do not consider their children Christians, nor expect them to become Christians, till after they have wandered away for a time and become more or less hardened in sin. And according to their faith so is it.

"Thousands of children are baptized by Christian ministers and then no more account is taken of them than if they had never been baptized. If they are taught anything about their state it is that they are not Christians, but may become Christians after a while. Think of a child of serious mind learning for the first time that he is not a Christian. His father and mother are Christians, but he is outside the fold because he is too young. When he reaches the age of ten or twelve he may come in, but until then he must consider himself cut off from the fellowship of the saints and an alien from the household of God. He is too young to be converted, because he cannot understand the deep things of God.

"Who can understand these deep things? If he must wait till he can understand it all he must wait till the Day of Judgment. Is this the doctrine of the Bible? No. Jesus says concerning children, 'Of such is the kingdom of God.' Jesus meant what he said, that little children are in the kingdom of God, and this is precisely what our Church teaches. Our book of Discipline says, 'We hold that all children, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the kingdom of God, and therefore graciously entitled to baptism.' They are not made Christians by baptism, but they are baptized because they are Christians. They are not regenerated by baptism, but are baptized because they are Christ's. Baptism signifies an inward washing. God has pledged his grace to all children. They are already in his fold by virtue of his grace. By baptism they are initiated into the visible Church and should be counted among its members. They should be taught as soon as they are able to learn that they belong to the family of God with their parents. According to our Discipline it is not necessary for them to unite with the Church again on probation. They are to be assigned to classes, instructed in the things of the kingdom of God, and at a proper time, if they show evidences of piety they may be received into full communion without the probation which is required of those who come to us from the world."[1]

We hope to see the day when every church record will have its long list of baptized children, and when parents, pastors, Sunday schools, and Junior societies shall be intelligently and prayerfully seeking to train these young souls until at proper age they may be ready to intelligently choose Christ and his service for life, take the vows required by the Church and enter into full membership. Such a plan is in harmony with the teachings of Scripture, the best science, and the well-known facts of child life. If adopted, and earnestly and faithfully worked, it would be the means of saving our children, filling our churches with young people, and hastening the time when "they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."[2]

[1] *Christian Advocate*, May 2, 1901, p. 9. [2] Jer. xxxi, 34.

SELECTED LIST OF BOOKS ON THIS SUBJECT

CHILD STUDY

A Study of Child Nature. Elizabeth Harrison.
Children's Rights. Kate Douglas Wiggin.
The Development of the Child. N. Oppenheim.

PSYCHOLOGY

Talks to Teachers on Psychology. William James.
Psychology and Psychic Culture. R. P. Halleck.
Mental Development: Methods and Processes. J. M. Baldwin.
Psychology of Childhood. Frederick Tracy.
Psychology of Religion. E. D. Starbuck.
The Spiritual Life. George A. Coe.

HEREDITY

Heredity. Ribot.
Heredity and Christian Problems. A. H. Bradford.

PEDAGOGY AND TRAINING

Hints on Child Training. H. Clay Trumbull.
The Point of Contact in Teaching. Patterson DuBois.
The Kindergarten of the Church. Mary C. Foster.
A Study in Pedagogy. John H. Vincent.
Child Culture in the Home. Martha B. Mosher.
Young Workers in the Church. Thomas B. Neely.
Little Children in the Church of Christ. Charles Roads.
The Modern Sunday School. John H. Vincent.
The Teacher, the Child, and the Book. A. F. Schauffler.
Kindergarten Principles and Practice. Kate Douglas Wiggin.
The Kindergarten in a Nutshell. Nora A. Smith.
Teacher-Training. Charles Roads.
Bible School Pedagogy. A. H. McKinney.

INDEX

passim Bamphwanns of "he [illegible] [illegible]
dearing (— [illegible])

p. 22. Is religion a [illegible] [illegible]?
in Xcam? Regeneration?

p 23 "Old Jesuitical [illegible]" of Orig
[illegible] a [illegible]! [illegible]
better get his history & [illegible] up!!

p 23–4. [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible]!!! Story of Cain's [illegible]
[illegible] p 24. [illegible] [illegible]
X tell a [illegible]! Why not
[illegible] [illegible] to a [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] showing Mother

Of Cain [illegible] that "the 'the [illegible]' had
been known [illegible] — [illegible], [illegible] [illegible]
Speaking with the capital (p 26) "the Child
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]" he says "This is
one of the most important discoveries of modern
[illegible] study"! [illegible] his own [illegible]
intellect — Eve [illegible] had Cain on her knee [illegible]
[illegible] before she found that out. [illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible] (for [illegible] may [illegible] another ..

50. [illegible] having [illegible]
[illegible] !! Cf p 51.

77 "[illegible]" [illegible] ([illegible]
[illegible]) [illegible]
[illegible]

81 "the [illegible] characteristics
[illegible]" [illegible]?

87 [illegible] "[illegible]
[illegible]" [illegible] "[illegible]" with
[illegible]

88 "The [illegible] of the [illegible]
which is one of the [illegible]
of this book." [illegible]
Cf p. 89

89-90 "Common [illegible]" quote.

92 sq. [illegible] ([illegible]
on that subject) [illegible] p 94..

96. Arrival of conversion to God in Con-
version

109 "Naturalness" of Conversion -
Relat to personal habitudes

118 Not God but man in the Divine
forth

130. Environment and strength [illegible]-
[illegible]

132 Presumptions pro-will [illegible]
[illegible]

135. The [illegible] with the Divine
forth a [illegible] must [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] can [illegible]
within it

155 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]

235 Principles of Christ - conversion
([illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible])